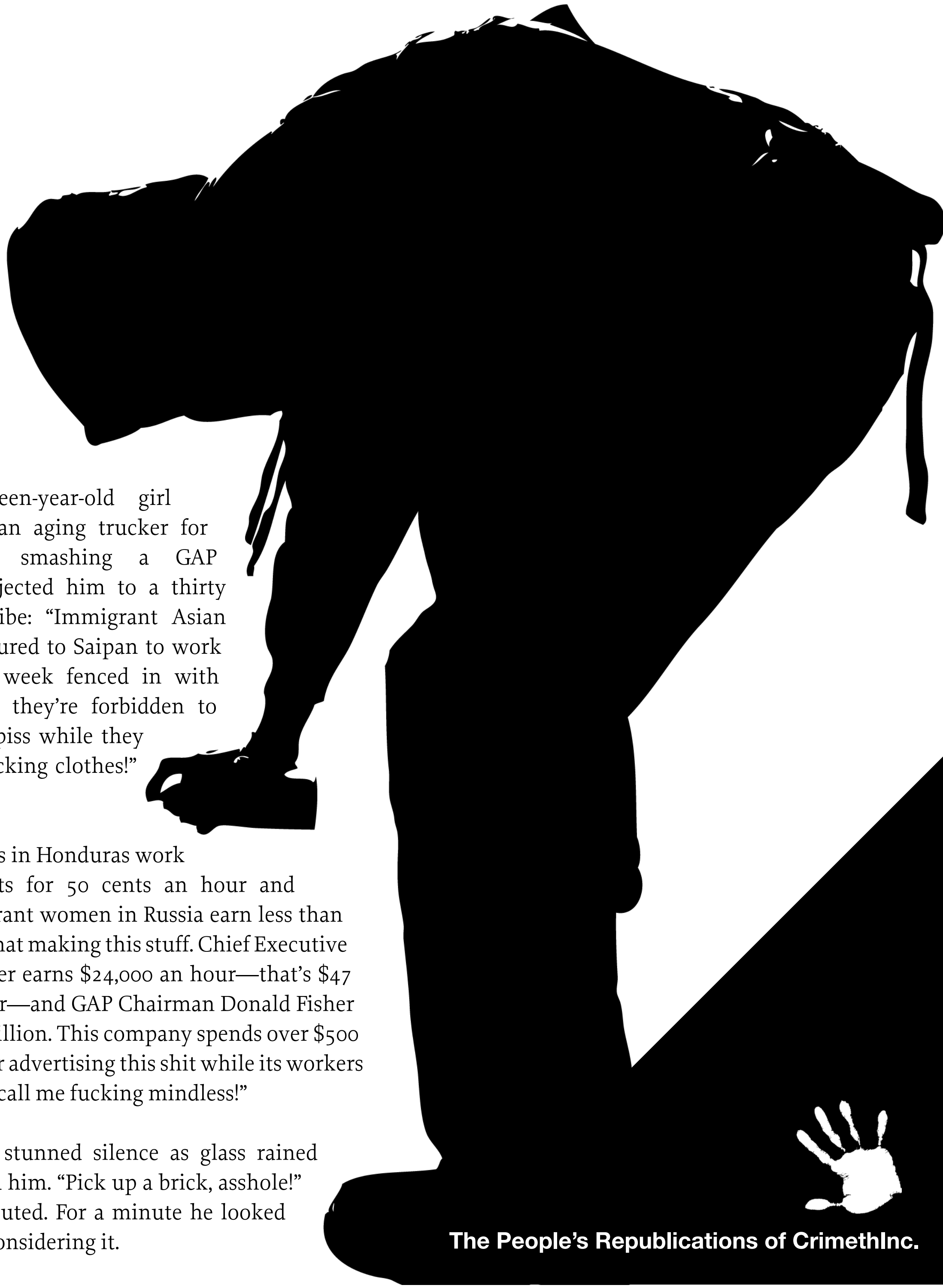
N30

November 30, 1999

The Seattle WTO Protests

A memoir and analysis, with an eye to the future



One seventeen-year-old girl grabbed by an aging trucker for "mindlessly" smashing a GAP window subjected him to a thirty second diatribe: "Immigrant Asian women are lured to Saipan to work a seven-day week fenced in with barbed wire, they're forbidden to even take a piss while they sew these fucking clothes!" she yelled.

"Teenage girls in Honduras work 14-hour shifts for 50 cents an hour and Chinese migrant women in Russia earn less than a quarter of that making this stuff. Chief Executive Millard Dexter earns $24,000 an hour—that's $47 million a year—and GAP Chairman Donald Fisher is worth $8 billion. This company spends over $500 million a year advertising this shit while its workers starve. Don't call me fucking mindless!"

He stood in stunned silence as glass rained down around him. "Pick up a brick, asshole!" someone shouted. For a minute he looked like he was considering it.



The People's Republications of CrimethInc.

November 30, 2006

Fourteen years ago, many of us didn't even know we were anarchists. We made tentative steps to change our lives, without a clear idea of where we were going or why. We joined environmental organizations and formed punk rock bands. We experimented with cooperative living, confrontational unemployment, and politically motivated crime. We occupied trees; we traveled around the planet as witnesses and volunteers; we developed new traditions and codes of ethics. In the course of these adventures, we found each other, one by one; but we still felt isolated, still doubted our own strength, still wondered how to approach the revolution some of us dreamed of.

Seven years ago, some of us participated in a demonstration in Seattle against the World Trade Organization. Seeing each other there, we discovered that we were part of a worldwide movement. This infused us with an incredible momentum and sense of purpose: suddenly, we knew we were going to change the world, and we had a model for how to do so. The events of that one week in Seattle were more real to us than all the years that had led up to them—even for those of us who were not there.

Over the years that followed, we rode that momentum like a wild horse, pursuing the visions we had glimpsed in the streets of Seattle. We tried again and again to recreate that moment, succeeding only in creating other moments. We redefined what had happened, revisiting that point of origin again and again, finding that each time it had changed. We



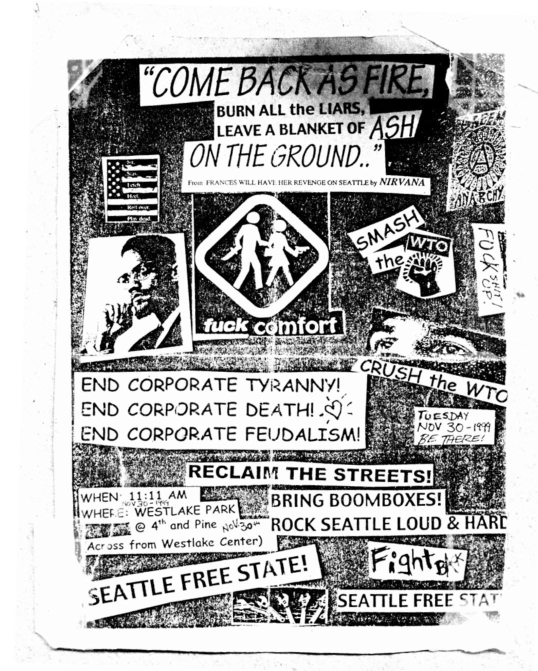


fought amongst ourselves. We ran into walls, ran out of steam, ran around and around in circles. We renounced our visions like jilted lovers, and along with them many of the tactics and strategies they had taught us. We tried to forget the whole thing ever happened. Some of us finally succeeded.

Today, it has been seven years since the WTO protests in Seattle. Rumor has it that every seven years, every cell in our bodies regenerates: every seven years, we are born anew and begin a new phase of life. If this is true, then today we should finally be able to reflect on the WTO protests without nostalgia, glorification, or defensiveness and derive lessons from them to apply to our current efforts. Today, we are finally free of this specter that has haunted us, and it can finally become our own.

Here we present for posterity two texts that stand out in the veritable ocean of material on the subject. They could not be more distinct: one is an impassioned personal account of participation in direct action, the other a dispassionate strategic analysis. It is our hope that together they will provide a sense of what took place that week in 1999—and more importantly what is possible now, along with an inkling of how to make it happen. To this purpose we also humbly append a brief afterword of our own.

– CrimethInc. World Tirade Organization



From the Archives

This flier advertised the convergence point for the black bloc that carried out all that famous property destruction. Looking at it now, it seems to support the thesis that the ones who triumphed in Seattle were not possessed of any extraordinary skills or organization—that is, unless the designer deliberately made it amateurish in order to fly under the radar.

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What Next?

The presidential campaign of 2008 will be the next backdrop against which major mass actions can be expected to take place. Whatever misgivings some of us currently have about them, for anarchists not to have a powerful presence in mass actions in 2008 would be tantamount to our disappearance from the national arena of social struggle.

The essential challenge of the mass action model is that its greatest strengths and weaknesses are identical. Working from the physics equation *tension=force/area*, this model brings together a great number of people in a small space so their coordinated actions can have exponential effects—but with sufficient warning, the state can also concentrate its forces to neutralize their efforts. Consequently, successful mass actions must either come as a surprise themselves or employ an unexpected strategy. At the G8 protests in Scotland in 2005, for example, participants outwitted the authorities by dispersing into the countryside to block roads outside the areas where police forces were concentrated.

Effective mass action necessitates that people from a broad range of perspectives work together without limiting each other. In that regard, mass actions are good practice for building the symbiotic relationships fundamental to an anarchist society. The mobilizations that succeeded in Seattle, Quebec City, and elsewhere succeeded because a great number of people simultaneously engaged in a diverse array of complementary tactics. Regardless of the success of a particular action, the ability to do this itself constitutes a victory over the segregation, isolation, and conflict promoted by the capitalist system. In that regard, the Seattle WTO protests were not an unrepeatable miracle, but rather an example of how powerful we can be whenever we find ways to work together.

Suggested Reading

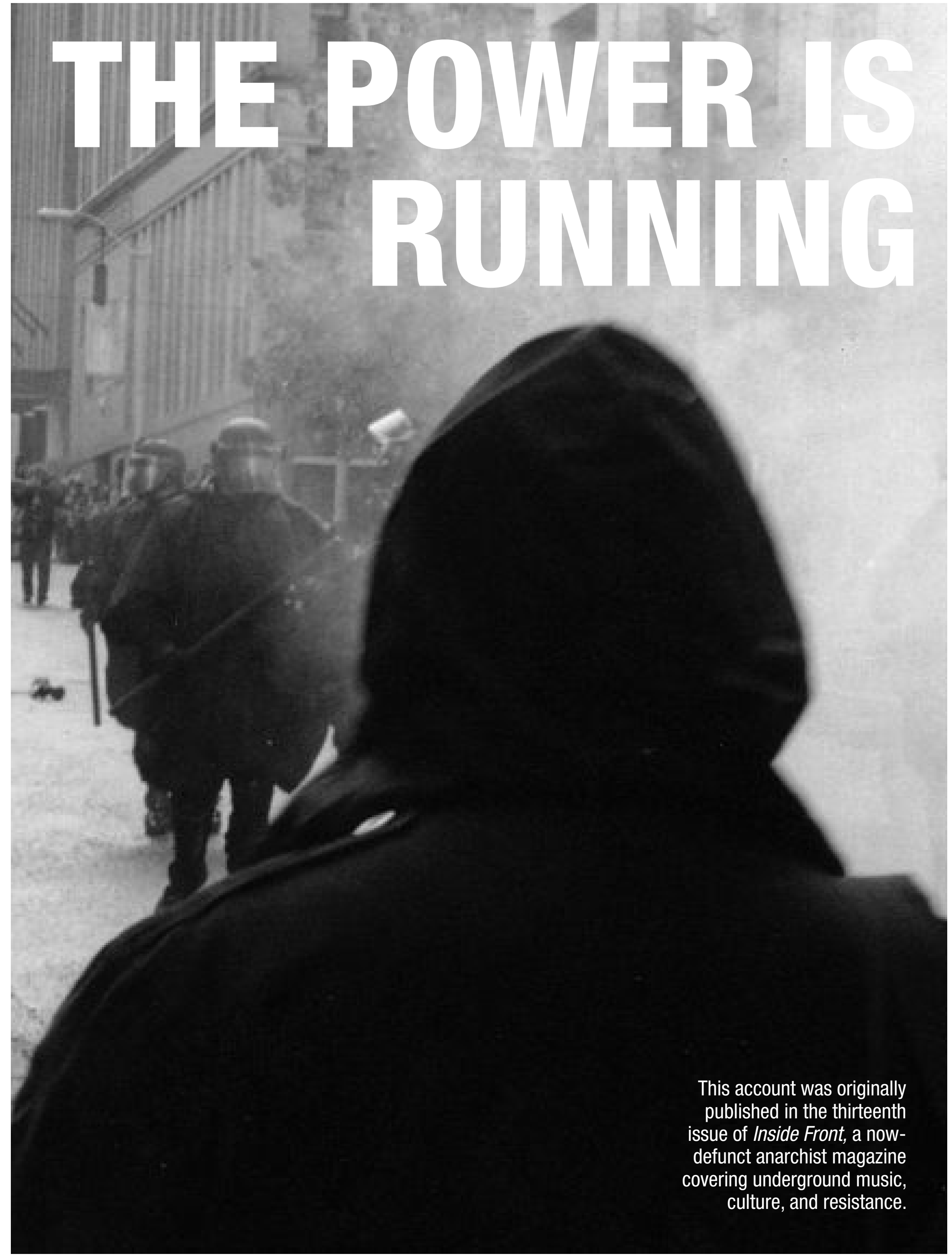
We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism—Through testimony, photos, tactics, and history, this book provides an excellent context for anticapitalist organizing in the years up to and immediately following the WTO protests.

"Five Years After WTO Protests" by Chuck Munson—In this article, one of the administrators of www.infoshop.org refutes corporate media reports that the movement behind the WTO protests had come to an end by 2004.

"N30 Black Bloc Communiqué" by the Acme Collective—Some of the participants in the Black Bloc in Seattle released this excellent and nuanced defense of anarchist property destruction at the WTO demonstrations immediately afterwards.

"Demonstrating Resistance," the feature article in the first issue of *Rolling Thunder*—This extensive analysis follows the anarchist experimentation with mass action and autonomous action models that occurred between 2000 and 2005, drawing conclusions about what factors must be present for each approach to succeed.

A simple Google search should turn up online versions of the last three of these texts.



THE POWER IS RUNNING

This account was originally published in the thirteenth issue of *Inside Front,* a now-defunct anarchist magazine covering underground music, culture, and resistance.

I can't do it. I can't. I can't tell you what it felt like any more than a bird could tell me what it feels like to fly. I can tell you my story, but it's only my head talking. My heart can't write, and my guts don't have lips. I cannot truly explain how it felt to taste ecstasy in every breath as the invincible forces of privilege and coercive power finally lost control, how it felt to stare down the world's most ruinous and abusive bullies and watch them blink, how it felt to fall in love with tens of thousands of people at once, to not know what would happen next, to become dangerous.

And that is a tragedy that haunts me as I write every one of these words. Because if somehow I could share with you what I felt for ten days in Seattle, you would never settle for anything less again. You would kick in your TV, run outside buck naked, tear up the freeway with your bare hands, flip tanks upside down, and dance with panda bears through the streets. The barbarians would emerge from exile to knock down heaven's door and the dead would rise up from their coffins and cubicles. And once you got a taste of the sublime joy of reclaiming control of your life and your world, of regaining your lost kinship in a human community of which you are an integral component, of realizing your wildest dreams and desires, you would do whatever it takes to make it happen again.

I can tell you my story, but it's only my head talking. My heart can't write, and my guts don't have lips.



Monday, November 22 *through* Thursday, November 25

On Monday I leave for Seattle from Columbus, Georgia on a Greyhound bus, alone, already hungry, with no money and nothing to eat. Six hours later in Atlanta my bag is whisked away to a different bus, leaving me with no warm clothes and nothing to read, either. I stare blankly out the window at the bleak, diseased wasteland of concrete and smoke and cars, at the trees and fields and hills and rivers, at all the cities I've never seen before—Chattanooga, Nashville, Louisville, Indianapolis, Gary, Chicago.

I scrounge what little food I can at bus stations, but by Tuesday night I am hungry enough that I'm starting to get mean. In Chicago a grizzled old man gives me a sandwich, which

Seattle phase of struggle is not how to handle repression, but how to sustain morale.

After anticapitalists lost the initiative, it was inevitable that the partisans of willful impotence would regain it. Proportionate to the number of participants, the antiwar movement of 2002 to 2003 was incredibly ineffectual, largely due to the machinations of liberals and communists who did their best to prevent anyone from taking effective action. And once the legend of Seattle ceased to be the origin myth of an existing, vibrant movement, it became a burden upon everyone who tried to apply the mass action model. Even though many anarchist demonstrations between 2002 and 2005 put everything that happened in the mid-1990s to shame, they seemed stunted and disappointing compared with the Battle of Seattle. Past accomplishments always cast a shadow over the present, and shadows loom bigger the further the object casting them recedes.

The FTAA ministerial in Miami four years after the Seattle WTO protests showed how much ground anticapitalists had lost and how much their adversaries—both those in uniform and those carrying protest signs—had learned. While there were probably almost as many committed anarchists in Miami as there were in Seattle, far fewer other protesters showed up—partly because Miami is so far from the rest of the US, partly because it has the most reactionary Latino population of any US city, and partly because the ability of anticapitalist networks to bring out protesters had been sapped by demoralization and competition with antiwar organizing. The AFL-CIO duplicitously coordinated with the police while asking demonstrators not to carry out direct action during their march, and the demonstrators—insanely—agreed to request. This enabled the police to concentrate on beating and pepper-spraying people before the union march, controlling the streets during it, and then viciously brutalizing and arresting everyone who remained in town after it. The police tactics in Miami, which were significantly more aggressive than those of the police in Seattle, showed that the fluke in Seattle was not that the police were so aggressive but that the corporate media were caught off guard and accidentally reported on their violence.[2] Finally, the strategy of the demonstrators in Miami, which consisted of a largely symbolic assault on the fence surrounding the meetings, had no hope of actually interfering with them. The protests in Miami only succeeded in disrupting business as usual and giving the FTAA a bad name because the authorities, still transfixed by the specter of Seattle, went to such lengths to repress them.

As of this writing, the Miami FTAA ministerial is itself three years behind us, and there have been no major mass actions in the US since Bush's second inauguration almost two years ago. Paradoxically, the good news is that enough time may now have elapsed since the WTO protests that a mass mobilization with a clever strategy could catch the powers that be by surprise again—but the bad news is that anarchists, demoralized from so many years of trying to "repeat Seattle," may not yet be ready to stake everything on another attempt.

[2] Likewise, as the dramatically militarized police force in Miami consisted of at least six times as many officers as protected the WTO in Seattle, and they faced off against crowds perhaps a fifth the size of those that had gathered in 1999, they could not fall back on the excuse of being "overwhelmed" and forced into violence. If anything, the police in Miami were more violent than those in Seattle, thoughtlessly attacking demonstrators, retired union members, and corporate media reporters alike.

In addition to giving the WTO a public image makeover and successfully forcing concessions from it, the militancy of the demonstrators in Seattle pushed its supposed critics to adopt a more uncompromising stance. Organized labor and segments of the Democratic Party have to present the illusion of being oppositional in order to justify their existence. As was frankly acknowledged in the RAND report, they hoped to maintain this illusion and simultaneously absorb and neutralize any radical tendencies by putting in an appearance at the Seattle WTO protests. Once they found themselves caught up in a huge, obviously popular demonstration against the WTO, they had to feign at least some sympathy or else reveal their "opposition" to be a mere pretense. Thus we can see that direct action is the most effective means both for putting pressure on adversaries and for exerting leverage on supposed allies. Even if you don't want to overthrow the government, forget about voting and petitioning—the only hope for change is in the streets.

Finally, the successes in Seattle brought US anarchists worldwide visibility, along with a needed morale boost, and provided a format for future actions. The "summit-hopping" model made a virtue of the transience that has been such a stumbling block for anticapitalist organizing in North America; like it or not, a movement must make the best of its weaknesses, and if many anarchists couldn't be counted on to stay in one place long enough to do effective local organizing at least that mobility enabled them to come together occasionally at capitalist summits.

The breakthroughs in Seattle that affected the anarchist community turned out in the long run to be dangerous gifts: as soon as the media attention, the thrill of victory, and the effectiveness of the new model were taken away, many anarchists felt they were back at square one.

A Complex Legacy

In reflecting on the mobilization in Seattle, people often overlook the years of failure that had preceded it. What happened in Seattle was possible precisely because it had been years, if not decades, since so many people joined in disruptive action against a capitalist institution in the US. As noted in the RAND analysis, police expected symbolic arrests à la the anti-nuclear demonstrations of the 1980s, not the coordinated obstruction and rioting they got. Subsequent mass actions were much more difficult to pull off, as the authorities mobilized every resource to ensure that what happened in Seattle would not happen again.

Despite this, Seattle was followed by a series of demonstrations unlike anything in the preceding decade: Washington, D.C. was shut down the following April by protests against the International Monetary Fund, and a year later the FTAA ministerial in Quebec City occasioned the most intense street fighting since the Los Angeles riots of 1992. All the teargas in the country was no match for the enthusiasm of the anticapitalist movement once people had a model to work from and a structure to plug into. It was not until after September 11, 2001 that the tide finally began to recede, and this occurred primarily as a result of the widespread self-fulfilling prophecy that the high point of anticapitalist mass actions was over. The momentum that followed Seattle was not destroyed by the government response, it was abandoned by those who had maintained it: the most significant question presented by the



eat, and a dollar, which I give to another grizzled old man. I stare and think and try to sleep. Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire... Wednesday morning, Minneapolis. Haggard young women with kids, disgruntled truckers, teenage runaways. Fargo, Bismarck, Billings. The North Dakotan whose car broke down in Minnesota who can't afford to fix it. Butte, Missoula, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane. The grizzled young man who buys me a waffle in Montana because he hasn't seen me eat in a day and a half. I fall asleep a few hours past Spokane in the Cascades and wake up, Thursday November 25, at about midnight, in Seattle.

I stagger off the bus, meet my mysterious liaison Ms. J, and am miraculously reunited with my long lost bag. Fifteen minutes later I outside of the 420 Denny Space, a nerve center of sorts where I find dozens of people bustling around with saws and paint and walkie-talkies, plotting and planning and building. This is a very good sign, but after seventy-eight hours of Greyhound time it's also pretty jarring. I'm utterly exhausted, ravenously hungry, and in no condition to conspire yet. I catch a ride south from downtown to the Roasted Filbert, a cavernous, dusty, unmarked warehouse with concrete floors, no windows, and a purple door: which is serving as a refuge for everyone who shows up at 420 with nowhere to stay. I find a space inside, curl up in my bag, and pass out listening to warm bodies breathing all around me.

Friday, November 26

At dawn I ride back up to Denny with four others from Filbert. None of us know each other. Downtown the towers glitter in the distance like decorated tombs, spectacular monuments to wealth and power that loom overhead just as the institutions they embody loom over every aspect of our lives. I know that we are flying under their radar, and that we are not alone. For the first time in my life those almighty towers, and all that they stand for, look vulnerable to me.

Up at Denny the bustle and activity of Thursday night has multiplied exponentially. I help out with the kitchen and the dishwashing, finally get some food, and spend most of the day getting my bearings. Around dusk Critical Mass issues out of 420. I ride with somebody on the back of her bike since I don't have one. Later I just run. We ride around and around the upscale shopping districts downtown, taking over whatever streets we want, whenever we want, without any authorization or permission, singing, dancing, howling, and conversing with anyone who will listen. Someone begins chanting "We're gonna win! We're gonna win!" and for the first time in my life I believe it.

Much to my surprise and delight, I chance

upon Mr. X in the midst of Critical Mass. I have only seen him once since I spent much of the summer of 1998 in a van with him. He is in Seattle with Ms. X and X-Dog. Our reunion is cut short, however, when a psychopath in a fancy car tries to run us over. Mr. X screams like a banshee, jumps onto the hood, slips a piece of cardboard under the wipers and over the entire windshield, pounds three big ass dents in the hood with his fist, and disappears into the night.

Later we invade the Washington Trade and Convention Center, where the WTO summit is supposed to be held, and ride in circles through the foyer for quite some time before a security guard punches someone in the face and the police finally manage to chase us away.

Saturday, November 27

I spend all morning and early afternoon at Denny. The 420 Space is serving as a welcome mat, training grounds, mess hall, and nerve center, and it is turning into a complete madhouse. Countless meetings and workshops, endless training and skill sharing, and ceaseless cooking, cleaning, eating, and welding all rage perpetually and simultaneously under Denny's roof. More and more people pour in throughout the day, and it is beginning to get difficult to move around inside.

I leave late Saturday afternoon for the Hitco space to make lockboxes. Hitco is every bit as wild as Denny. While others hammer away at mammoth puppets and matching sea turtle suits we set up an assembly line and build hundreds of lockboxes out of PVC pipe, chicken wire, framing nails, tar, sand, yarn, and duct tape. We turn them out late into the night. I ride to 420, walk to Filbert, and sleep covered with tar.

Sunday, November 28

Sunday morning Denny is an utterly unfathomable zoo. I learn that Saturday night banners were dropped all over downtown, one from the top of a crane over I-5. At noon a parade complete with giant puppets, street theater, radical cheerleading, and an anarchic marching band rolls out of Seattle Central Community College (SCCC). The street party is a roaring success, reclaiming downtown for hours and railing fiercely at all manifestations of corporate dominance.

Unfortunately I miss it. I go back to Hitco around five to finish the lockboxes, unaware that the festival is still bumping. I get back to 420 around eight and run across Ms. C. We are eating dinner when we hear that a mass public squat is about to be opened on Virginia St. The word is free shelter downtown for anyone who needs it during the protests, and for Seattle's homeless after. About forty of us steal through the night to recover a fragment of the world that has been stolen from us.

913 Virginia Street. The door opens, and two masked heads emerge from the darkness. "GET IN!" I run through the door, up the stairs, through a wooden hatch, onto the second floor. The door closes behind me. The building is enormous. This floor could harbor a horde of barbarians. The power is running. Androgynous ninja elves scamper about everywhere around me, hammering away furiously on a



PLAGIARISTS' POSTSCRIPT

From this vantage point, it is possible to interpret the WTO protests according to any number of frameworks. They were a watershed in the development of the contemporary anticapitalist movement, at which thousands of disparate groups discovered each other and the power they could wield together. They were the point at which, a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the old "democracy versus communism" opposition, the fundamental dichotomy of global politics was recast as corporate capitalism versus the common people. They were, as the researchers of the RAND corporation self-servingly discovered, the substantiation of theories about how new communications technologies would shape social conflict. They were simultaneously the beginning and the high point of a "movement of movements" which ended when terrorists hijacked the global stage on September 11th, or when communist splinter groups hijacked the anti-war movement a year and a half later, or which continues so long as certain anthropology professors require a subject for inquiry.

The only thing that matters for us anarchists, of course, is what we can learn from the past to act effectively in the present. Does it make sense to pursue "another Seattle," or is that just a will-o'-the-wisp? Could any of the tactics that succeeded in Seattle be as effective today, or are they subject to a law of diminishing returns?

What Happened in Seattle

Immediately following the Seattle WTO protests, some reformists moaned that the confrontational tactics and far-reaching goals of militant participants alienated people and ruined any chance of concretely affecting national policy. Yet by reformist standards, the so-called anti-globalization movement[1] associated with the Seattle protests achieved practically unprecedented triumphs, and the credit for this must go at least in part to the militants. The next WTO meeting had to be held in Qatar, cementing the image of the WTO as an anti-democratic, oppressive elite. Many of the proposals that had most outraged activists were immediately dropped; likewise, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement is now essentially dead in the water. Some analysts have concluded that the mobilization against corporate globalization peaked early because its goals were not ambitious *enough.*

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[1] Ironically, the "anti-globalization movement" was perhaps the most globally interconnected movement in the history of protest movements. The corporate media christened it with that misnomer because identifying it for what it was—a movement opposing capitalist globalization—would acknowledge the existence of capitalism, and thus the possibility of other social and economic systems.

these weapons. The widespread use of "non-lethal" weapons increased the aggressiveness of police and the increased combativeness eroded strategic control.

The flexible and improvised communications infrastructure used by the Direct Action Network was a significant feature in the protests. One of the dictums of netwar is that netwar actors have a much greater interest in keeping communications working, rather than shutting them down. The dense and diversified communications used by the Direct Action Network could not have been significantly harmed by any action less than a total media and communications blackout in Seattle. Not only is such an action impossible for the economic and social costs which would result, but a blackout of the required magnitude would be the informational equivalent of unconditional surrender by the establishment. Because the ultimate prize in a netwar conflict is understanding, not opinion, it is the quality of information, not the quantity, which determines the final outcome.

Netwar is nothing new as a form of conflict. It is a new concept, but the underlying reality of it has been around for a long time. What is new is the richer informational environment which makes the organization of civil (and uncivil) society into networks easier and more efficient.

The essential conditions for victory in a netwar conflict are also the conditions which make waging netwar possible: the shared understanding of a situation which demands direct action. In many ways, the victory of the Direct Action Network was implicit in the fact that so many people understood the conflict and were willing to act on that understanding.

thousand different projects. I board up windows at a breakneck pace with a tireless Danish carpenter. Plywood, two-by-fours, chicken wire, black plastic, anything. Next room.

The cops are coming. They're about to fire tear gas through all these windows.
No they're not.
More rooms.
Yes they are. Cover all this up so they can't tell how many of us are in here.
No they're not.
"WHO THE FUCK LET IN PHOTOGRAPHERS?"
"I'VE GOT FELONY WARRANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE!"
The cops are coming.
Two rooms left.
No they're not.
"KEEP THOSE FUCKING PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THAT FRONT ROOM!"
"SOMEBODY GO TALK TO THEM!"
Yes they are.
We're done.
No they're not...

There are two doors, one in front and one in back. The former can be opened from inside



by dismantling the contraption that braces it. The latter, where Mr. N has constructed a virtually impregnable barricade out of toilets, concrete, rebar, plywood, and an iron fire door, could only be opened by a tank. The doors are adjacent to two stairwells, one in front and one in back, which lead to either end of a long winding hallway that connects about ten rooms. The rooms are vast and spacious, with 25' ceilings, gigantic windows, and giant stages and lofts of various shapes and sizes. One has been furnished with an ample supply of food, water, and medical supplies. Someone runs out of another, arms raised in triumph, a crescent wrench in one fist and a plunger in the other. "THE TOILET WORKS!" In yet another Ms. I and Ms. S arm a security team with short wave radios. Every window on this floor is boarded up except for those in the front room—where earlier we gave a full fledged press conference before banishing the blow-dried talking heads of the corporate media altogether—and nothing inside can be distinguished from below. The third floor is essentially identical to the second, except that none of the windows are boarded up and there is a ladder to the roof in the back stairwell. There is no way to approach the building that is not visible from the roof, where someone stands guard with a short-wave radio, waiting for the inevitable. Here come the cops, this time for real...

We assemble in The Spiral Room and send Mr. G outside to negotiate, agreeing that he will not accept, refuse, offer, or request any proposal before we have all consensed to do so. The cops say we need to let in a fire inspector. They need to know if we are posing a fire hazard to ourselves. After much discussion we consense that this is complete bullshit. They don't know the layout of the building, they or how many of us are inside, how sturdy our barricades are, or for that matter if we all have machine guns or not. They want to inspect the building to determine how difficult it will be to raid. When we refuse they cut the water, then the power.

By this time a bizarre circus has gathered below. Reporters, feds, and undercover agents film us, and our friends from 420 and the Independent Media Center film them. We hang banners and signs from the roof and windows. Mine says "RESISTANCE IS FERTILE." Outside Mr. G wrangles with the cops. Inside we are embroiled in an absolutely endless meeting regarding their ever-changing promises and threats. As it gets later and later we are left with less friends and more enemies, who make less promises and more threats. The situation becomes increasingly tense, but they never move in on us. Around four they finally leave, swearing that they will return at eight with the landlord to chase us out. I sleep with one eye open, and wake up four different times to false alarms.

The cops are coming.

No they're not.

Yes they are.

No they're not.

Monday, November 29

Throughout the morning a crowd from 420 and everywhere else gathers outside, beating drums and singing. The cops return at eight with the landlord, block the doors, and refuse to let anyone in or out. Around noon we manage to get a lawyer inside. He tries to cut us a deal. We will occupy the building until Friday, then hand it over to Share/Wheel, a homeless advocacy group, who will convert it into a free shelter. The landlord claims he will get sued if someone gets hurt in his building. We write up a waiver clearing him of any liability for anything that happens inside. He refuses to sign it. This all takes hours.

The negotiations break down completely by late afternoon. The landlord wants us disposed of. The cops slaver in anticipation. Around 5:30 they swear that in thirty minutes they will kick down the doors, beat ass, break heads, and arrest everyone inside. They will let anyone who is willing to leave out now. This is



our "last chance." Nearly everyone opts out at this point, understandably having no desire to spend the 30th in jail. They promise to tear ass up to Denny and return with as much backup as they can scrape together. I know that whether this is our "last chance" or not, there are nowhere near enough cops outside to actually raid the building, and I cannot fathom why. Later I learn that crowds have amassed all over downtown. Some have surrounded The Gap, some the Westin Hotel so that the WTO delegates can't get in to sleep, and some have attacked a McDonald's, breaking some windows.

About fifteen of us remain inside. There a lot of people out front, but not enough. The situation looks bleak. At 6 p.m. the riot cops show up. We decide that there is no longer any

and tactical openness. The three key phases of the street actions were: the Tuesday morning "swarm" which blockaded strategic intersections; the collapse of the police strategy to suppress the Direct Action Network protests while allowing the AFL-CIO parade; and the failure of the AFL-CIO parade to engulf the Direct Action Network protests into a form acceptable to the Clinton administration.

The failure of the police strategy was almost instantaneous with the success of the blockade. Non-violent civil disobedience usually succeeds when the numbers of protesters is sufficiently large. The use of force to disperse such demonstrations is a moral victory for the protesters if it succeeds and a double victory if it fails. In Seattle, the attempts to forcibly disperse the demonstrations not only failed, but also set into motion a chain of events which undermined the legitimacy of the police actions.

The critical instances in which the police lost control of their own strategy began with the initial use of tear gas. The circumstances surrounding the decision to use gas are still unknown, as is where the decision originated. The pursuit of demonstrators up Capitol Hill on Tuesday and Wednesday nights accelerated the collapsing strategy of forcible dispersion. On Wednesday night, the failure of civilian officials to control the police dramatically underscored the breakdown of political control. On Thursday, the refusal of the City Council to ratify the mayor's emergency declarations began the process of regaining political control of the police. And the January dismissal of charges against demonstrators underscored the tenuous legality of the city's actions against the protesters.

Implications

The most profound outcome of the WTO protests was the appearance of the netwar construct in American politics. The "Battle in Seattle" was fought not only in the streets, but also in the infosphere. The WTO protests were the first to take full advantage of the extremely dense and wide-reaching alternative media network which uses the internet. The use of "media special forces" is one of the hallmarks of netwar and informational conflicts. With the rise of the alternative media, the internet and other unmediated mass communications, it is no longer possible for the establishment to control the information reaching the public. Attempts to distort the news for propaganda or public relations purposes will enhance movement recruiting and create a "credibility gap" for establishment policies.

The WTO protests were the Chiapas insurrection come to America. Like the Zapatista netwar, the conflict was one of civil society networks versus markets. The role of institutions, be they police or military forces, NAFTA, WTO, or political administrations, was secondary to the conflict. Institutions intermediate netwar conflicts involving markets, but they are not the primary actors. In Seattle, the police could not decide the issue; they could only determine the level of violence.

As it turned out, the introduction of new "non-lethal" armaments such as chemical irritant sprays and pellets, guns firing a variety of rubber, wooden or "bean-bag" projectiles, "robocop" armor, and all the rest were not only ineffective but actually counter-productive in dealing with non-violent protesters. In most cases, protesters were only infuriated and stiffened in their resistance by the use of

ments said that the decisions had been made before the WTO protests. Chief Stamper stated that one purpose of announcing his resignation was to “de-politicize” the investigations into police actions during the protests. The departures of the other polices officials were virtually ignored in the media, though they represent the departure of three out of seven of the chief’s highest-ranking assistants.

The Seattle police organizations launched a massive public-relations blitz. In one of the more bizarre actions, police officers began shaking down local merchants through the sales of T-shirts—as if the police had won some sort of a major victory. Uniformed officers delivered boxes of the shirts to Dutch Ned’s Bar in Pioneer Square. The shirts show the Space Needle engulfed in a tornado and say “Battle in Seattle WTO 99.” The Guild also organized a rally to show support for the police. State Rep. Luke Esser, R-Bellevue, a conservative “law and order” advocate, issued a statement saying that he would attend the police rally “commending those brave men and women for working around the clock in treacherous conditions to maintain law and order during the WTO riots.” The *Seattle Times* ran a variety of pro-police articles, including one front-page headline announcing the retirement of a police dog.

And the police department began writing letters of commendation for actions during the protests. “We’re hearing stories from throughout the department of heroism and courageousness,” said Lisa Ross, a spokeswoman for Chief Stamper. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter Kimberly Wilson described some of these stories as “surreal,” citing the case of Sgt. Mike Coombs. Coombs saw a guard escorting a foreign dignitary draw a handgun when protesters, an act that would normally be considered assault with a deadly weapon. As the guard threatened the protesters, some tried to grab the guard’s gun arm. Coombs sprayed the protesters with pepper-spray and hustled the delegation away from the protesters. His quick thinking probably saved lives, said Lt. Neil Low, who is writing the commendation letter. The actions by other officers deserving commendation have not been disclosed.

The American Civil Liberties Union, the National Lawyers Guild, and Amnesty International announced that they were investigating the events in Seattle. Amnesty International looked into “widespread police abuses” against protesters, including “indiscriminant use” of chemical agents, rubber, and wooden projectiles, “flashbang” grenades, beatings of prisoners in jail, threats of rape during strip searches, and the use of “four-point restraint chairs” in the jail. The mayor’s office issued a statement saying, “At this time, we have no indication that any events such as those described by Amnesty International ever occurred.” The *Seattle Weekly* published stories substantiating reports of jail beatings and other charges by Amnesty International.

Aftermath

The WTO protests in Seattle were the largest left-wing demonstrations in America since the [first] Gulf War. They were also the most successful American political demonstrations of the decade, if success for a demonstration is measured by the degree of congruence between the protesters’ goals and the effect on public policy issues.

The WTO protests succeeded in the streets by a combination of strategic surprise



way to defend the building, and that there is no point in making martyrs of ourselves—except for Mr. B, who says he will hide in the rafters and hold out alone if he has to. We dismantle the barricade at the front door and run outside.

We are greeted with a wondrous sight. The cavalry has arrived from 420. Somehow hordes of people have slid in between the cops and the door, and more stream in from all around. Everyone goes berserk. We pound and bang on everything we can get our hands on, howling and dancing and taking up most of the block. Mr. B is up on the roof, roaring at the top of his lungs with his arms raised to the sky as if all the indomitable power of the avenging squatter demon is running through the marrow of his bones. The cops are at a loss. Every time they to give us an order or command we just dance, but when they try to charge their van across the block to disperse us we surround it and slow it down to a crawl, then beat and kick and rock it while the couple inside squirms. It is all they can do to limp their wounded warhorse through to the other side before all the little elves flip the damn thing over. The cops leave.

Pandemonium reigns. Up on the roof Mr. B roars in triumph, and the walls tremble at the tops of the tombs. I suspect that the cops are not prepared to start a riot on Virginia Street when so much of their force is downtown protecting the world’s most ruinous and abusive corporations and the delegates who represent them. A fragment of the world has been recovered, and it is safe for now. About forty people run inside,

and I run back up to Denny. A few hours later, right before I leave 420 for the night, I run into Ms. X and X-Dog. She tells me that Mr. X is in jail. She is trying desperately to bail him out before the state discovers exactly who he is and what he has done. I promise to keep in contact with her and to do all I can to help. Before I fall asleep back at the squat, beneath a window with the glittering banks looming over me, I remember the time Mr. X told me that there were only two things that he would never do. He would never hurt anyone, and he would never take anyone's food. His captors do both, and some day they will suffer the consequences. They have locked Mr. X in a cage, and tomorrow it's time for payback.

Tuesday, November 30

I wake up before dawn and walk to SCCC, where the festivities begin. Before long I am surrounded by thousands of friends, and at 7 a.m. we set out for the Washington Trade and Convention Center, where the summit is supposed to be held. As we near it we fan out, taking over the surrounding streets and blockading entrances to the building. Everything you can imagine turns into a barricade. Bodies, puppets, lockboxes, a fifty foot tripod, barrels full of concrete, dumpsters, cars. We begin to form a human chain around the convention center.

In an amusing display of either arrogance or stupidity the delegates all wear matching beige suits and big ID tags that say "DELEGATE." Whenever they try to approach the building we stop them and chase them off. Without the protection of their armed servants they are as powerless as a brain without a body, and their expressions are priceless as they run away. Before long the chain is complete, and the only ways in are through parking garages, hotels, and underground tunnels. We cut these off one by one. I dart around by myself, patching up holes where blockades need help and trailing delegates to their secret entrances. I dog one for blocks, grinning malevolently at him as he searches in vain for a way into the convention center. He finally gives up and asks a cop for advice, and I listen in, rubbing my hands with glee. "How do we get inside?"

"Well, sir... right now there *is* no way to get inside."

The opening ceremonies of the summit are postponed, then canceled altogether. This is when the cops begin to riot. They have failed their masters miserably and they are pissed.



JAIL BLOCKADE & RELEASE : POLICE OFFICIALS RESIGN
AFTERMATH : IMPLICATIONS

Jail Blockade and Release

By Thursday, the success of the Direct Action Network protests was undeniable. The WTO conference was prevented from holding its opening ceremonies on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the conference began to come unraveled when President Clinton made repeated statements supporting the demonstrators—although it appears he was referring only to the AFL-CIO—and announced a U.S. policy initiative which guaranteed that major consensus at the WTO conference would be impossible. On Wednesday night, police attacked local residents in the sort of breakdown of command and discipline shown by defeated troops. Graffiti began appearing around Seattle reading: "Remember, We Are Winning!" On Thursday afternoon, police finally came to an accommodation with Direct Action Network protesters and provided a police escort for a march.

The focus of the Direct Action Network strategy now shifted from the WTO to support for those still in jail as a result of the mass arrests. For two days, vigils were held at the Public Safety Building, at times completely surrounding the building.

On Friday evening, after meeting with city officials, Direct Action Network legal staff announced an agreement with the city. Jailed protesters would now begin cooperating with the courts and properly identify themselves. Many had refused to provide their names and addresses, giving their names only as "Jane WTO," "John WTO," or in one case "Emiliano Zapata." As they were processed for arraignment, they would be released on personal recognizance. Nearly all of those jailed were released by Sunday. After the jailed protesters were released Seattle City Attorney Mark Sidran issued a statement to the press denying that any agreement had been reached and promising to prosecute all cases.

In early January, Sidran moved to dismiss over ninety percent of the cases, disclosing that virtually none of them could be prosecuted because police had not bothered to file the necessary reports or identify the arresting officers during the mass arrests.

Police Officials Resign

The final act of the WTO protests was the announced departures of Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper, strategic commander Assistant Chief Ed Joiner, Nancy McPherson, civilian director of the Community and Information Services, and Assistant Chief of Investigations, Harve Fergusson. Those who made public statements regarding their resignations or retire

then immediately firing a shotgun within inches of the young man's torso. Police officials initially described the officer's conduct as "appropriate." At a parking lot near Broadway, two journalism students were videotaping the action. A King County deputy went up to their car and motioned for the young women to roll down a window. When they did, the deputy pepper-sprayed them both, shouting "Tape this, bitch!" This footage has also been repeatedly aired on national television. The deputy remained publicly unidentified and on duty while an internal investigation was conducted. These and other incidents resulted in civil suits filed against the Seattle Police as the agency in charge, as well as the officers involved.

Around midnight, the disorder had drawn several local government officials, who tried to get the police and demonstrators to disengage. They included King County Councilman Brian Derdowski, City Councilmen Richard Conlin and Nick Licata, and Councilwoman-elect Judy Nicastro.

"Those council members tried to work through the chain of command of the Police Department and they were unable to get anybody," Derdowski said. For two hours, the civilian officials tried to get the police to cease attacking the crowd. Finally, around 2 a.m., the crowd began to leave. The police responded with volleys of gas and rubber projectiles.

"I asked the police to be professional and just take one step back. That would be the sign that these folks needed, and they would disperse," Derdowski said. "The police said they couldn't do that, so we went back and told the people that they needed to leave the area. And a lot of them did, but a few persisted. And they started singing Christmas carols. They sang 'Jingle Bells,' and when they started singing 'Silent Night,' the tear gas started. Something hit me in the back, and there was pandemonium there, and so we left the area," Derdowski said.

I run up to the barricade at 5th and Seneca, which I hear is about to be attacked. The cops, sporting Darth Vader suits and unmarked raincoats, have formed a line across Seneca. Behind them there are five or six more on horses and a couple with big ass guns. We push a line of dumpsters in front of them so that they can't trample us, and form an enormous immovable knot so that they can't drag us away and arrest us. The cops flip on gas masks and begin to fire tear gas into the crowd. Others blast us with jumbo tanks of pepper spray. One throws a can of gas into my lap. Ronald McDonald and his band of merry devils run amok through my organs, burning plastic bonfires in my windpipe and hacking at my lungs with chainsaws dipped in DDT. Vampire fangs sunk down to the gums suck the soul from my skull, and all that remains in the hellish wasteland between my ears is fear and hatred.

Everyone around me starts to run. While I am getting up a cop bucks me in the face with pepper spray. Tony the Tiger is scouring my eyes with his chemical claws, my nostrils are searing, and I can't see a damn thing. I scramble down Seneca stone blind and finally collapse in the street, gasping and convulsing. Someone



pours water on my face and rubs life back into my eyes. I am born again in their hands. We all tear ass back up Seneca towards 5th to make out what the cops are doing and how to stop them. I realize that my friends are not all just going to bail when things start to get ugly.

And here come the cops, storming through the sickly clouds, ejaculating toxic gas as fast as they can stroke their triggers. They open up on us with rubber bullets and concussion grenades, and we stampede back down Seneca and around the corner. The stampede becomes a fairly orderly retreat as we book down 4th Avenue, hurling everything we can get our hands on out into the street to protect ourselves from their cars and horses. Trash cans, newspaper stands, concrete tree planters, dumpsters, construction barricades, anything that will stop them or slow them down. The gas is inescapable but we grab the cans and throw them back. The rubber bullets are legitimately scary but we chuck sticks, stones, and bottles and hope for the best. I find myself on top of a newspaper stand in the middle of 4th Avenue, unleashing a psychotic stream of invective at the interchangeable bullies who are approaching through the smoke. "FUCK YOU, COWARDS!, I'M INVINCIBLE!"

This is happening all over town. They can move us but they cannot disperse us. At 4th and Union the worm is beginning to turn. The cops, facing thousands and thousands of us now, are a little less gung ho than they were at 5th and Seneca. They form a line across 4th and we come to another standoff. Only this time no one is going to sit down for them. I find myself on top of another newspaper stand in the middle of 4th Avenue, roaring at the top of my lungs. "I can't TELL you how THRILLED I am to BE here right now. I LOVE every ONE of you, like a SISTER or a BROTHER. There is NOWHERE, in the WORLD, EVER, that I would RATHER BE then WHERE I AM right now. There is NOTHING I would RATHER BE DOING than WHAT I AM DOING right now. I would RATHER be OUT HERE than spend another FUCKING SECOND in my CAR,



or at my JOB, or WATCHING TV. I DON'T think these cops can say that. I DON'T think those delegates can say that. I would rather EAT MORE TEAR GAS than any more of their FUCKING fast food. I would rather DRINK MORE PEPPER SPRAY than any more of their FUCKING soft drinks. I would rather DEAL WITH THAT than ACCEPT THIS SHIT for another FUCKING SECOND. And I would rather DIE LIVING than continue to LIVE DYING..."

Somebody hugs me. It has been so long since anyone has touched me that I nearly melt in their arms. Someone else jumps up and roars, and then someone else, and then someone else. I rest for a minute while a stout Chicano man recounts some interesting news. While the servants were busy terrorizing us and the rest the blockades, the wily and mobile Black Bloc dealt with their masters in kind. Masked little elves armed with slingshots, sledgehammers, mallets chains, and crowbars attacked The Gap, McDonald's, Niketown, Bank of America, Starbucks, Levi's, Fidelity Investment, Old Navy, Key Bank, Washington Mutual, Nordstrom's, US Bankcorp, Planet Hollywood, and other manifestations of corporate dominance, smashing windows and redecorating facades. I am ecstatic. Those glittering towers are not invincible after all. The greatest trick the vampires ever played was convincing us that garlic did not exist. Let their facade be torn to pieces, and may the walls come tumbling down.

The stout Chicano man tells me that during the L.A. riot he and his friends burned

Lambrecht said. "One of the officers pulled him out of the car and not gingerly."

"I don't want to aid the hooligans who are raising hell and I don't want to take on specific officers... But there are huge flaws with the officers when it comes to people of color. I'm 58 years old. I had on a $400 suit, but last night, I was just another nigger," said Councilman McIver. A few days later, Councilman McIver stated that he was not pursuing the matter and wanted it dropped.

Street Battles for the Hell of It

The final incident of Wednesday night demonstrated the police strategy for clearing the streets was not only ineffective, but that civilian control of law enforcement ceased to exist for a time. The "Battle of Capitol Hill" degenerated into a "police riot," perhaps the only time during the WTO protests that police temporarily lost control of their forces on the street.

As the demonstrators withdrew from downtown curfew area at around 7 p.m., a group of several hundred protesters moved north on Fourth Avenue, followed at a distance by police. The group withdrew in an orderly manner, stopping several times along the way to vote on where they were going. They moved east on Denny Way into Capitol Hill and reached Broadway and East Harrison Street at about 7:45 p.m., where they joined another group which was already at the intersection. By now the group numbered approximately 500. As they passed through the neighborhood, they were greeted by cheering residents and honks of support from motorists. The crowd marched back and forth along Broadway for about an hour, carrying banners and accompanied by a band playing music. The atmosphere was one of celebration rather than protest.

The crowd was predominantly residents of Capitol Hill, many of whom had been angered by police the previous night when bystanders and people on their way home from work had been indiscriminately attacked by the police who had pursued demonstrators up the hill. At about 9 p.m., police and National Guard forces began arriving in the area. By 9:30 p.m., police closed several blocks of Broadway between East Republican and East John. Tensions were high, due to the residents resentment of the police presence and police fears of violence. KIRO TV reported that the people opposing police that night consisted entirely of Capitol Hill residents. Afterwards, police claimed there were reports of agitators carrying gasoline bombs and throwing rocks and bottles. They said some protesters charged officers. No gasoline bombs were thrown that evening and news videos show only police charging, not civilians attacking police.

Police began using pepper spray, tear gas, and concussion grenades shortly after 9:30 p.m., first at John Street and Broadway to the south, moving north, and near Harrison, moving south. More police blocked side streets, preventing the crowds from dispersing.

"The protesters looked completely calm to me... They were not instigating this," said Erin Katz, a Capitol Hill resident who watched from behind police lines near Pine Street. "I heard absolutely no warning and they started to gas them."

For the next two and a half hours, police rampaged along Broadway. It was during this period that some of the week's worst instances of police misconduct occurred. National television repeatedly aired footage of a Tukwila officer kicking a young man in the groin and

P-I interview, they took it to mean that the US proposal of a WTO body to consider worldwide core labor standards was the first step toward establishing compulsory international sanctions against 'violators.'"

On the streets, Wednesday afternoon was a repeat of Tuesday. The police pulled back for the four hours that President Clinton was in public view, just as they had pulled back as the AFL-CIO parade approached downtown. In the words of one TV reporter, "The streets were strangely quiet." At 1 p.m., Washington Governor Gary Locke gave a live interview on local television. Locke stated that order was restored to Seattle and told local shoppers to "come downtown"—inside the perimeter of the "no protest" zone. Unfortunately, the governor hadn't heard about police plans for a 4 p.m. crackdown to drive protesters out of the downtown core, a time which coincided with the downtown rush hour.

Post-Presidential Disorder

As Clinton's motorcade departed, the streets were once again blanketed in tear gas, and police fired pepper-spray at anyone who got in their way. At the Pike Place Market, tear gas was severe enough that produce merchants put out signs the next day announcing they were closed because their fruits and vegetables were contaminated.

As on Tuesday, the police failed to move the crowds of protesters and the main axis of protest movement once again became Pike and Pine Streets. After two hours, police were only able to move two blocks, up to Second Avenue. A protester blockade at Third and Pine stayed in place until voluntarily dispersed at 6:45 p.m. It appears likely that the Direct Action Network had decided to hold the streets until the 7 p.m. curfew and then withdraw to Capitol Hill.

As the curfew went into effect at 7 p.m., the streets were mostly empty. As if to celebrate their "control" of the streets, a column of a dozen police cars raced through the empty downtown core with emergency lights flashing and sirens blaring. Police officials explained to reporters that this "wild weasel" operation was a "show of force to clear the streets." The news videos of the stream of cars are one of the more surreal images from the entire week. Things would get even stranger that night.

At about the same time as the "wild weasels" were racing through the streets, police assaulted Seattle City Councilman Richard McIver. McIver said city police officers yanked him from his car, pulled his arms behind his back and started to cuff him as he drove to a World Trade Organization reception event at the nearby Westin Hotel. The council member had been stopped shortly before by police who let him continue after identifying himself. The second time he was stopped and identified himself, a policeman threw McIvor's city council business card on the ground and assaulted him.

The incident was witnessed by a U.S. Congressman, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, and Bill Lambrecht, Washington, D.C.-correspondent for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

"What he [McIver] describes is what I saw," Kucinich said. "Four to five policemen converged on him and kind of spun him around. I thought the people who handled it were overly aggressive. I'm sure given the tension that existed in the city, there might be many cases where in hindsight they might do things differently but that seemed excessive."

"It was clear that he was telling them who he was. They seemed unpersuadable,"

down police stations and nothing else. We freestyle from the newspaper stand until my larynx is throbbing. Eventually the cops get impatient and one of them bucks my man full in the face with pepper spray. I kiss him on the head, they club me and everyone else they can reach, and back down 4th Avenue I go, a phalanx of crocodiles in ankylosaurus suits at my heels wreaking havoc and pain.

Yet another standoff at 4th and Pike. The cops form a line across 4th Avenue. This is getting repetitive. I have inhaled so much tear gas, ingested so much pepper spray, and ducked so many concussion grenades and rubber bullets that running the bulls on 4th Avenue is no longer novel or fun. It's just frustrating. We outnumber them almost immeasurably, yet they still attack us with impunity. They hold all the cards, they make all the rules, and they cheat all the time. I am terrified. We are in no way seriously prepared to defend ourselves. All it would take would be for one dumb ass aggro cop to decide to get his rocks off and open fire for all the rest to follow suit. It would be a massacre. Kent State. Bonfires smolder behind my eyes, and the smoke rises out of my mouth.

I choose one—at random, for they all look exactly the same. Every inch of his body is hidden under black cyborg armor. He is armed to the teeth. His face is hidden under a gas mask, face shield, and full helmet. "O'Neil" is embroidered on his bulletproof vest. I plant myself squarely in front of his face and I stare dead into his eyes. He won't look at me. He blinks constantly, looks down, left, up, right; anywhere but at me. It infuriates me almost beyond words that this coward has the impudence to attack me when I am unarmed but lacks the courage to even look me in the eyes. "Can you look me in the eyes? CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES? LOOK ME IN THE EYES, O'NEIL." Nothing.

I know why he won't look at me. When he was halter-broken he joined his trainers in a companionship stimulated not by love, but by hatred—hatred for the "enemy" who has always been designated as a barbarian, savage, communist, jap, criminal, gook, subhuman, drug dealer, terrorist, scum; less than human and therefore legitimate prey. I try to make it impossible for him to label me as a faceless protester, the enemy. I pull off my ski mask and continue to stare into his eyes. I tell him that I am from the south, about fixing houses and laying floors and loading tractor trailer trucks, about nearly getting killed in a car wreck in October, about carrying my dog around crying to all the bushes that she loved to root around in the day she died of cancer. I tell him that we all have our stories, that there are no faceless protesters here. Nothing.

"Can you look me in the eyes, O'Neil? I am a human being, and I refuse to let you evade that. I won't let you label me as a protester, and I don't want to have to label you as a cop. I refuse to accept that they have broken you completely, that there is not something left in you which is still capable of empathizing with me. I want to be able to treat you as an equal, but only if you prove to me that you are willing to do the same. And the only way you can do that is by joining us, or walking away."

I remain dead still, staring into his weak cow eyes. He is blinking excessively and is visibly uncomfortable. "Can you look me in the eyes, O'Neil? The difference between me and you is that I want to be here and you don't. I know why I am here. I am enjoying myself. I am reveling in this. I am rejoicing. I have been waiting for this to happen since I was a little kid. There is nowhere, in the world that I would rather be than where I am right now. There is nothing I would rather be doing than what I am doing right now. It has never been so magnificent to feel the sublime power of life running through the marrow of my bones. I know that you don't want to be here. I know that you don't know why you are here. I know that you are not enjoying yourself. I know that you don't want to be doing this. And no one is holding a gun to your head and forcing you to. Wherever you

want to be, go there, now. Whatever you want to be doing, do it, now. Go home and get out my way. Go make love with your girlfriend or boyfriend, go snuggle with your kids or dog, go watch TV if that's what you want, but stay out of my way because this is a lot more important to me than it is to you."

I have not moved my feet or my eyeballs at all. I have been trying to blink as little as possible. O'Neil's eyes are quivering and squirming to avoid me beneath the mask.

"O'NEIL! CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES? CAN YOU DO THAT FOR ME, O'NEIL? CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES. Basically this whole 'Battle of Seattle' boils down to the relationship between you and me. And really, there are only two kinds of relationships that we can have anymore. If you can either join us or walk away then you will be my brother, and I will embrace you. If you cannot then you will be my enemy, and I will fight you. The relationship that we are not going to have is the one where you are dominant and I am subservient. That is no longer an option. That will never be an option again.

"Which kind of relationship do you want to have with me, O'Neil? Look around you. Look at all of these people singing and dancing and making music. Don't you see how beautiful this is? Don't you see how much more healthy and strong and fulfilling and desirable and fun relationships that rest on mutual respect and consent and understanding and solidarity and love are than ones that rest on force and fear and coercion and violence and hatred? Don't you see that the life and the world that we are beginning to create out here is superior to the one that you have been trained to accept? Don't you see that we are going to win? Don't you want to be a part of this? I know you do because you still can't look me in eyes. If you want to remain my enemy then so be it. But if you want to be my brother all you have to do is join us or walk away."

At this exact moment the Infernal Noise Brigade appears. For the first time since I began this surreal monologue I look behind me. A small man wearing a gas mask and fatigues is prancing about in front, dancing lustily with two oversized black and green flags. Behind him two women wearing gas masks and fatigues march side by side, each bearing an oversized black and green mock wooden rifle. Two columns of about fifteen march behind the women with the guns. They are all wearing gas masks and fatigues, and they are all playing drums and horns and all sorts of other noisemakers. They are making the most glorious uproar that I have ever heard.

The Infernal Noise Brigade marches all the way to the front where we are standing. When they reach the line the columns transform into a whirling circle. We form more circles around them, holding hands and leaping through the air, dancing around and around in concentric rings like a tribe of elves. We dance with absolute abandon, in possibly the most unrestrained explosion of sheer fury and joy I have ever seen. On one side of the line across 4th Avenue there is a pulsating festival of resistance and life. On the other side there is a blank wall of obedience and death. The comparison is impossible to miss. It hits you over the head with a hammer.

When the dance is over I return to my post up in O'Neil's face. I stare into his eyes and invoke all the love and rage I can muster to fashion an auger to bore through his mask and into his brain. And Cow Eyes cries crocodile tears. His eyes are brimming, with red veins throbbing. His cheeks are moist. He won't look at me. "O'Neil, I don't care if you cry or not. I don't care what you're thinking right now. I only care about what you do. Before long you will get orders to attack us, or one of you will get impatient and provoke another confrontation. What are you going to do? When that happens I am going to be standing right here. If you choose to remain our enemy then you are going to have to hit me first. You are going to have to hurt me

Secret Service in Seattle, Special Agent Ronald Legan, estimated that the parade numbered 20,000 and the total number of demonstrators was 50,000. As the excerpts from Clinton's statements clearly show, some understanding that the AFL-CIO would control the protests existed between the President and the labor leaders:

"I think certainly if we'd had it [the protests] any place in the continental United States we would have had the same thing and even if we'd gone to Honolulu there might have been thousands of people there. What I regret is not that there are protesters there… What I regret is that a small number of people have done non-peaceful things and have tried to block access and prevent meetings. That's wrong. It's not only illegal, it's just wrong.

"I regret very much that a few people have given the protesters a bad name, because I think the fact that the protesters are there, were it not for those stopping meetings, stopping movements and not being peaceful, would be a positive.

"…And then I think finally there are people who question whether these trading rules are benefiting lower income countries, poor countries, and question whether there is damage to the environment from certain trading arrangements that wouldn't otherwise be there, and who question whether this is a race to the bottom or the top. So that labor unions and wealthier countries want to have certain basic core labor standards observed in poorer countries because they think it will be better for average people so that the trading system actually benefits. So I think that's what is bringing all those people out.

"…I think that what we ought to do first of all to adopt the United States' position on a working group on labor within the WTO, and then that working group should develop these core labor standards, and then they ought to be a part of every trade agreement, and ultimately I would favor a system in which sanctions would come for violating any provision of a trade agreement, but we've got to do this in steps.

"I do think it is worth noting that the strongest opposition to this position, however, comes from the leaders of developing countries, including a lot of developing countries who have left-wing governments, not right-wing governments, who believe that this is a strategy by the American labor movement to keep them down and keep them poor and keep them from selling products that they'd otherwise be highly competitive in the American market. It certainly could be used that way.

"…Again, if we can just get by the few people that aren't being peaceful and the people that are trying to stop people from meeting, I think the presence of others with legitimate questions about the WTO process, the environment and labor and how poor countries are treated, I think this can be a net positive, because we're going to have to build a much deeper consensus for global trade to carry it forward."

This interview had a very direct effect on the WTO negotiations. The *Post-Intelligencer* interview was read by many WTO delegates on Wednesday morning. Roger Downey captured the impact of Clinton's statements in a *Seattle Weekly* article titled "Clinton Throws Brick":

"When Clinton got up in Seattle and told the ministers that WTO had to clean up its act if it wanted American support, home folks may have nodded sagely in agreement; the delegates could only goggle speechlessly at his hypocrisy. When he dropped the sanctions brick in his

of arrests was around sixty. On Wednesday morning, somewhere around three hundred arrests were made at two locations. Wednesday evening, two hundred more arrests were made at First Avenue and Clay Street, near the Seattle Center. Another dozen or fewer people, mostly residents of Capitol Hill, would be arrested during the night. Approximately five hundred and forty of the arrests were for misdemeanors and eleven were for felony charges such as vandalism or looting. One of the felony arrests occurred in the Greenwood district, miles from the downtown area.

The arrests ended for two reasons. First and most importantly, the police were running out of transportation to remove those arrested from downtown. As the city busses arrived at Sand Point, protesters refused to leave some of the busses. Others obstructed the booking procedures by refusing to identify themselves. Many of the "arrest" affinity groups carried no identification for this very purpose.

Kelly Quirke, executive director of the Rainforest Action Network, was arrested at Westlake center. "They drove us to a converted naval base, where we spent the next 15 hours on the bus, eating and drinking only the food and water we had on hand (they gave us none), doing interviews and organizing the next morning's press conference until our cell phones went dead (we were quite adept at getting out of the plastic cuffs), singing, meeting (of course), and demanding to see our lawyers," he said.

Police arrest procedures were so chaotic and slipshod that over 400 cases were dropped by City Attorney Mark Sidran due to the absence of arrest reports and the failure of arresting officers to identify themselves. The Direct Action Network strategy of blockade did not end with the arrest of protesters. The target simply shifted from the streets to the jails and then the courts. The second reason for the police withdrawal was the demand by the Secret Service that the presidential motorcade route and speaking locations be given top priority by police.

The preceding day, as police and federal security officials had milled around in an atmosphere of panic at the Multi-Agency Command Center in the Public Safety Building, Ronald Legan, the special agent in charge of the Seattle office of the Secret Service, laid down an ultimatum to Seattle officials about the presidential visit. "I remember saying that unless we could get control of the streets, we would recommend that he not come," Legan said. "Now the problem there is that, with this president, he sets his own agenda and goes where he wants. And we did not want to have to battle a 30-car motorcade in and out of Seattle."

Seattle Assistant Chief Ed Joiner said he would not characterize the discussion as "threatening... but it was clear that if the situation was going to be the following day what it was then, there was no way you could bring the president of the United States into Seattle."

Presidential Appearance

President Clinton admitted the coordinated strategy between the AFL-CIO and the White House in an interview with *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter Michael Paulson. The interview occurred on Tuesday evening, as the President was between Washington D.C. and San Francisco. It is clear that Clinton was either not aware or chose to deny that the Direct Action Network protests were nearly equal in size to the AFL-CIO parade. Clinton's chief of the



first. I dare you to look me in the eyes when you do it. You may be able to hurt me and not look at me. You may be able to look at me and not hurt me. But you won't be able to look me in the eyes while you hurt me, because you are afraid you will lose your nerve. You are afraid of me, and you should be.

"O'Neil, you all have been terrorizing us all day. If this goes on all night we will have to start fighting back. And you and I will be standing right here in the middle of it. I have no illusions about what that means. Neither should you. We may get killed. But I would rather deal with that than accept this one second longer. I would rather die than give in to you. I don't think you can say that, can you, O'Neil? Would you rather die than be my brother? Who are you dying for? Where are they? Whoever gives you orders is standing behind you, man. Whoever gives them orders is relaxing down at the station, and whoever gives them orders is safe in some high rise somewhere, laughing at your foolish ass! Why isn't your boss, and their boss, out here with you, O'Neil, risking their lives and crying in the middle of 4th Avenue? Why should they? You do it all for them! What are you thinking? I just don't get it. They don't care about you, hell, I care about you more than they do. You're getting used, hustled, played, man, and you will be discarded the minute you become expendable. Please look me in the eyes. I'm serious, O'Neil, come dance with me..."

Someone whispers in my ear that another cop is crying down the line to my right. For a fleeting moment I can feel it coming, the fiery dragon breath of the day that will come when the servants turn their backs on their masters and dance...

...And then it's gone. Because O'Neil is not dancing. He is completely beaten. His lifeless eyes don't even quiver or squirm. And he won't look at me. I could whisper in his nightmares for a thousand years, I could burn my face onto the backs of his eyelids, I could stare at him every morning from the bathroom mirror, but

he would never look me in the eyes. He is too well-trained, too completely broken, too weak to feel compassion for the enemy. His eyes are dead. There is nothing left. The magic words that could pierce his armor and resurrect him elude me, if they exist at all.

"O'Neil, I know that you have been broken and trained. So have I. I know that you are just following orders and just doing your job. I have done the same. But we are ultimately responsible for our actions, and their consequences. There is a life and a world and a community waiting for you on this side of the line that can make you wild and whole again, if you want them. But if you prefer to lay it all to waste, if you prefer death and despair to love and life, if all of these words bounce off of your armor and you still choose to hurt me then FUCK you, because the Nuremberg defense doesn't fly."

I have nothing left to say. I sing the last verse of my beaten heroes' song, softly, over and over and over again, staring into O'Neil's eyes and waiting for the inevitable. "...In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold, greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold—we can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old..."

Eventually a cop down to my right either gets impatient or gets orders. He grabs a guy, completely randomly, pulls him across the line, and starts beating him. The crowd surges to rescue our friend, and O'Neil makes his choice. "LOOK ME IN THE EYES, O'NEIL!" He clubs the person standing next to me, and the cop standing next to him clubs me. "LOOK ME IN THE EYES, MOTHERFUCKER!" But he never does. I ram into him as hard as I can, praying that the sea behind me will finally break through the wall, drown the both of us, and carry my friend away to safety. But I am not strong enough, and the wall of death beats us back once more. Over my shoulder I watch one cop walk up to a very small older woman and unload a tank of pepper spray into her eyes. Her indomitable and bitter face is the last thing I see before I have to run away.

There are no words that are poisonous enough to convey the venom that I hold for O'Neil and all of the rest of his kind. These wretched scabs, these Uncle Toms, these despicable bullies, these hellish machines, these dead bodies are utterly beneath contempt. I look at their faces and I feel nothing but hatred. I run down 4th Avenue, ducking gas and grenades, my eyes brimming with red veins throbbing. Training has dehumanized me in O'Neil's eyes, and O'Neil in mine.



MASS ARRESTS A DAY LATE : PRESIDENTIAL APPEARANCE
POST-PRESIDENTIAL DISORDER : STREET BATTLES FOR THE HELL OF IT

Mass Arrests A Day Late

At 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday morning, the police began mass arrests. Direct Action Network protesters began assembling at a few locations and others made their way into the downtown core. Some of the arrests occurred at Denny Park, well to the north of the downtown. Police handcuffed some demonstrators and put them on city busses which moved the arrestees to the temporary jail at the former Sand Point Naval Air Station. Other demonstrators had their signs taken away from them, but were not arrested. These proceeded downtown.

According to Kelly Quirke, Executive Director of the Rainforest Action Network, the police mass arrest strategy included targeting protest leaders. "At the police chief's and mayor's press conference we had watched on TV late the night before, they announced that they were going to go after the ringleaders," Quirke said. The counter-leadership targeting was as ineffective as other police tactics, due to the Direct Action Network's decentralized decision-making process, which operated by group consensus. In effect, a network has no "ringleaders."

Protesters converged on the Westlake Center and arrests there began at approximately 8 a.m. As the morning wore on, it became apparent that Westlake Center, rather than the WTO conference location, was the focus of Wednesday's blockade. The Direct Action Network had correctly identified the shopping and business district as being the vulnerable point in the new police strategy. By 9 a.m. Westlake Center was clogged by a peaceful sit-down protest as protesters patiently waited for police to arrest them. The crowds, consisting of demonstrators waiting to join the sit in and spectators from business district, continued to swell. As one protester was arrested more would leave the crowd and sit down. Once again, the netwar tactic of "swarming" the target by stealthy approach succeeded.

By 10 a.m. it was becoming evident that the police tactics were not going to halt the sit-in and that the police were creating a situation which they could not control. At 10:30 a.m., the police commander stepped between his men and the protesters. He walked to the seated protesters, leaned down and said, "We're outta here." He then motioned to his men to leave the area and the police withdrew in an orderly manner. The protesters, both seated and among the crowd, were jubilant. They had prevailed.

The disengagement of the police at Westlake Center marked the failure of mass arrests as a police tactic. On Tuesday, the total

who rode to town on union busses were gone. The conditions on Wednesday were far more favorable to the police than anything which could possibly have been arranged on Tuesday.

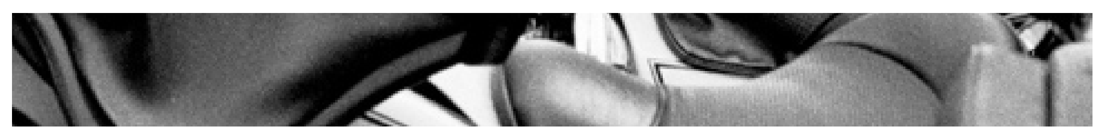
Assistant Chief Ed Joiner said Seattle police and their law enforcement partners initially looked hard at a plan based on preparations for the NATO conference in Washington, D.C. This plan was similar to the strategy which was put in place after the declaration of civil emergency: "We considered it and basically rejected it as something that, in a perfect world, we'd like to do, but in a real world is a less viable option. Can you imagine me going to the mayor and the governor, before the conference even happened, and saying 'I need to create this security perimeter from Seneca to Lenora Streets, from Fourth Avenue to the freeway, and I need to shut all the businesses down for five days the week after Thanksgiving?' Can you imagine the kind of response I'd get, besides them asking me for my resignation then?"

"It was impossible," Joiner said. "Politically it was impossible. The damage to the downtown business core would have been substantial."

Once again, the Direct Action Network prevailed. The victory on Tuesday was reaffirmed Wednesday, and Chief Stamper's concerns about bringing outside law enforcement into the city were realized in full that night when police rioted on Capitol Hill.



NETWAR IN THE EMERALD CITY: STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THE WTO PROTESTS



This report was published shortly after the WTO protests by the RAND Corporation, a think tank that touts its "objectivity" and purports to "improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis." Any perspective advanced by such a dubious entity should obviously be taken with a grain of salt. That said, this analysis is noteworthy for its comprehensive scope. Aspiring revolutionaries will be hard-pressed to find a better summary of what took place on the other side of the barricades that week. The text can be found online at **http://www.nwcitizen.us/publicgood/reports/wto/**.

Seattle, like many American cities, has self-appointed nicknames. One of Seattle's nicknames is "The Emerald City," a reference to its perpetually soggy evergreen vegetation and to the mythical Land of Oz. On November 30, 1999, Seattle awoke to the reality of an emerging global protest movement. This movement was not created in Seattle. Other protests with similar motives, participants, and strategies had been happening in the United States and around the world for a considerable time. What made the "N30" protests remarkable was the shock that we, like Dorothy and Toto, were no longer in Kansas.

The World Trade Organization protests in Seattle marked a turning point in national and international trade policy. The biggest outcome of the protests was the resurgence of the American Left's influence on the international trade issue. All in all, it was a stunning surprise to many of the parties involved: the Direct Action Network coordinating the protests, the AFL-CIO's new foray into grass-roots politics, the federal administration trying to steer a new course in national and multinational trade policies, the Seattle Police who found themselves leaderless when the dust settled, and Seattle Mayor Paul Schell, who was left standing alone amidst the political wreckage in the aftermath.

The central fact of the protests is the utter surprise and confusion that occurred during the initial confrontation on Tuesday morning. "It was a classic example of two armies coming into contact and immediately experiencing the total collapse their battle plans," said Daniel Junas, a Seattle political researcher.

What exactly happened during the crucial hours of the Battle in Seattle is shrouded in confusion and controversy, but the broad outlines can be discerned. The street action falls into three distinct phases: first, the Direct Action Network (DAN) protesters seized and held a handful of strategic intersections, immobilizing the police. Second, the police strategy fragmented over two contradictory goals: suppressing the DAN protests and allowing the labor parade. Third, the labor parade failed in its goal of controlling and diverting the DAN protesters away from the Convention Center. The influx of reinforcements who abandoned the labor parade and joined the DAN protests left the streets more firmly in control of the protesters, despite the use of tear gas by police since around 10 a.m.. By approximately 3 p.m. Tuesday, the battle was decided and the Direct Action Network had prevailed in their goal of shutting down the conference.

After that time, the outcome was certain. The battle continued for several days, spreading into other areas of the city. By Thursday, the World Trade Organization had capitulated and the police ceased attacking civilians, thereby recognizing a conclusion reached before darkness fell on Tuesday.

window, enabling others to enter and destroy the inside of the Starbucks," according to a police report. "Babcock entered the store and was arrested as he emerged from the crowd carrying several bags of coffee from the display inside of the store," the report said. The criminal complaint against Babcock states that he handed a one-pound bag of coffee to a police detective outside the store. Of the four people arrested at the coffee shop and charged with felonies, none were "Anarchists from Eugene." One was from Seattle, two appeared to be from Portland (although they gave the address of a Seattle homeless shelter), and Babcock's residence was not disclosed in news reports.

The process of the protesters' withdrawal from downtown coincided with the arrival of additional police reinforcements, the declaration of a 7 p.m. curfew, and the fall of darkness. The WTO had announced the cancellation of activities around 1 p.m., although word of the cancellation did not become widespread until late afternoon. Based on the videos and photographs of the move up Pine Street, the protesters appear to have decided to leave downtown and were followed, not "swept," by police. The police decision to follow up the hill, firing tear gas and rubber bullets, is inexplicable in terms of clearing downtown. Of all the police actions during Tuesday, only the initial deployment of tear gas at 6th and University and the pursuit up Capitol Hill suggest a breakdown in command. The police decision not to disengage continued the disturbance late into the night. The clashes with police at the top of Capitol Hill were simply echoes of the earlier police defeat in the day-long "Battle in Seattle."

After

With the departure of the AFL-CIO parade participants, the Direct Action Network assumed total control of the protests in Seattle. With their one brief appearance, the Black Bloc presence in the streets subsided. The media, however, directed considerable attention to the Eugene contingent. The media coup for the Black Bloc created an unprecedented amount of attention for the philosophy of "autonomist" anarchism.

The Direct Action Network strategy of non-violent civil disobedience clearly had succeeded against the AFL-CIO's strategy of controlling and marginalizing protests in favor of a symbolic parade, the attempts of the Seattle police to clear the streets with tear gas, and the media effort to frame the issue in terms of "violent protesters." The DAN plan remained one of direct action by civil disobedience and deep, multi-layered support for autonomous affinity groups. The DAN strategy to emphasize the failure of the WTO to allow democratic participation in international trade discussions would now be tested against the hard-line strategies advocated by federal security officials.

Mayor Paul Schell's declaration of civil emergency dramatically altered the police strategy for suppressing the protests. As the hard-liners inside and outside the Seattle Police Department had wished, law enforcement was now "prepared." For the entire month of December, the wail went up from law enforcement "we weren't prepared." On Wednesday, the police were prepared with more troops, more gas, more barricades, a declaration of civil emergency complete with a "no protest zone" enclosing downtown, a curfew, and the suspension of civil liberties. The AFL-CIO parade was over and done with and the "day-trip"

blockade was still intact, immobilizing the police and preventing movement through the strategic triangle northeast of the AFL-CIO parade route and the downtown shopping district. As a result, most of the police action took place south and west of the Convention Center. Starting from the south along Union and University Streets, the police moved north along Third to Seventh Avenue to sweep the demonstrators north into the route along which the parade had retreated.

The police sweep northwards compressed the crowds into the east-west corridor running along Pike and Pine Streets. Here, the police again stalled against the large size of the crowds. The compression halted the police movement for several hours, as dumpsters which had been pushed into the streets to block the center of intersections began to burn. These bonfires slowly spread in an irregular way as the crowds withdrew west, not north as the police wished, and moved up into Capitol Hill in the early evening.

The Mayor's declaration of civil emergency at 3:25 p.m. set in motion the reinforcements from the King County Sheriff's Department, the Washington State Patrol, and local police departments from surrounding cities and towns. The arrival of the reinforcements in the streets occurred relatively slowly over the next three hours, impeded by the discord which dominated the relations between the Seattle Police and the King County Sheriff Dave Reichert.

By 5:30 p.m., the police lines—now increased by the arrival of Sheriff's deputies—had reached the corner of Fourth and Pike. The protesters began withdrawing west along Pike and Pine Streets, towards Capitol Hill, followed by police firing tear gas and rubber and wooden projectiles, and accompanied in some instances by vehicles. The police did not maintain close contact with the crowds and followed—not drove—them into Capitol Hill. The turning movement of the police—from a northern push to an eastern one—was not according to the plan outlined by Assistant Chief Ed Joiner. According to political researcher Daniel Junas, the Direct Action Network overheard police radio messages in which units in the East Precinct on Capitol Hill frantically demanded that the police downtown cease pushing demonstrators up the hill. The central command replied that they were pushing the crowds north (i.e., along the route of the AFL-CIO retreat from downtown), not east.

The loose contact between police and demonstrators permitted the last act of serious vandalism of the day. Police were not controlling the intersection at Sixth Avenue and Stewart Street, near the Westin Hotel. Protesters had built a bonfire in the center of the intersection. At approximately 7:15 p.m., a group of vandals smashed the window of the Starbucks coffee shop. This was the same coffee shop from which Washington State Patrol Chief Annette Sandberg saw the Direct Action Network affinity groups at 5:30 a.m., as they moved into position and seized the strategic intersections surrounding the WTO conference site. Events had come full circle.

As in the morning, the police presence was not visible to the protesters, although the evening response was quicker. Prosecutors alleged that Danny Babcock and an unidentified accomplice took a *USA Today* vending machine and hurled it through a window of the Starbucks store. "Defendant Babcock then kicked and pulled away the glass from the

THE PLAYERS

WTO Opponents

The Direct Action Network (DAN) represented an emerging species of political organization based on networks rather than institutions. The primary networked organizations in the Direct Action Network were a coalition of groups such as the Rainforest Action Network, Art & Revolution, and the Ruckus Society. Through the Direct Action Network, these groups coordinated nonviolent protest training, communications, and collective strategy and tactics through a decentralized process of consultation/consensus decision-making.

The strategy and tactics of these new—and primarily information-based—networks of non-governmental organizations evolved from trends represented by the ad hoc mobilization committees of the Viet Nam protest era, the "alternative summits" at recent world environmental and human rights conferences, and the loose coalitions which formed in opposition to U.S. policy during the Gulf War. Networks, as opposed to institutions, are shaped by decentralized command and control structures, are resistant to "decapitation" attacks targeting leaders, and are amorphous enough to weld together coalitions with significantly different agendas while concentrating forces on a single symbolic target.

Conflicts involving networks blur the distinction between offensive and defensive. The overall strategic goal of the Direct Action Network was to "shut down" the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. The "shut down" was accomplished by a variety of independent but strategically congruent actions summing up to a street blockade in the immediate vicinity of the WTO conference. Once the blockade came into being, the emphasis would shift to defending the blockade for as long as possible in the streets. In the spotlight of media attention created by the blockade, DAN hoped to launch a variety of informational operations emphasizing the anti-democratic, neo-colonial, and anti-environmental tendencies of trans-national trade agreements.

The Direct Action Network's goal was sufficiently broad to join together two major WTO opponents. The DAN factions can be distinguished by their varying focus on environmental or human rights issues.

The second major WTO opponent was American organized labor, the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO represents a hierarchical institution which emphasizes unitary, top-down command. There is little participation by rank and file in union decision-making, though ceremonial elections are sometimes held to legitimize leadership decisions. Essentially na-

tionalist in outlook, the AFL-CIO policy goals are directed more at American politics and less at international issues. Simply stated, the AFL-CIO's strategic target was supporting and legitimizing President Clinton's actions at the conference through purely symbolic displays by a loyal opposition.

As will be seen, Clinton indicated in an interview on Tuesday afternoon that there was strategic coordination between his administration and the AFL-CIO in regards to the parade and protests. In his remarks, President Clinton reinforced and repeated the false distinction between the AFL-CIO parade as "legitimate" and the DAN protests as "criminal dissent." This false distinction underscores the very reason for the protests in the first place: the exclusion of dissenting opinion from trade policy decisions.

Overall, the advantage went to the Direct Action Network, since their informational strategy effectively enclosed the coordinated strategy of the AFL-CIO and the federal government. As will be seen, at the critical moment in the street actions, the balance shifted to the Direct Action Network as non-union protesters and a dissenting union members left the AFL-CIO parade and joined the street protests, effectively sealing the success of the Direct Action Network's day-long blockade.

The World Trade Organization and Allies

On the other side of the conflict, the World Trade Organization and its allies composed a much more divided picture. The purpose of the WTO conference was to produce a new framework for the next round of negotiations on international trade. If successful, the "Seattle round" would resolve some of the disputes between ized nations. To a lesser extent, the WTO deliberations would broaden the scope of existing trade agreements to include developing countries. Prior to the Seattle conference, the WTO was dominated by the three major trading blocs: the western hemisphere block organized around the NAFTA treaties, the European Economic Community (EEC), and the Asian industrialized nations. The Seattle talks were the first which included developing countries. The complex tensions inside the WTO were reflected in its structure: on one side, the "green room" discussions dominated by the more powerful WTO members; on the other, and the general meeting where the entire body—including developing nations—would attempt to ratify the "green room" decisions.

The tensions surrounding this meeting were considerably greater than previous. The trade disagreements between the NAFTA nations (led by the U.S.), the EEC (led by France) and the Asian nations (led by Japan) promised to be major stumbling blocks. At the same time, the failure of the WTO consensus process would maintain and extend the dominance of the industrialized nations over the newer members. Even in the absence of protests outside the meeting, the tensions inside made it very likely that the Seattle round of negotiations would be off to a rocky start. All in all, the American posture consisted of blocking agreements while giving the appearance of support.

President Clinton's strategy was concentrated around his appearance at the conference, rather than the success of the conference itself. If the talks failed to produce a new framework, then the existing agreements (which heavily favored the shared interests of industrialized countries) would continue to provide the basis

meeting until Thursday, by which time the street protests had ceased to disrupt the city and protest marches were being escorted by police instead of being attacked by them. Even so, the council meeting was canceled because of "security" concerns. The press reports are not clear, but suggest that the council never ratified the emergency ordinance before it was rescinded by the mayor.

Mayor Schell spent most of the day at the WTO conference site, waiting for the opening ceremonies to begin. He did not arrive at the Multi-Agency Command Center in the Public Safety Building until about 3 p.m., two hours after the ceremonies had been canceled.

Beginning around 1 p.m., Governor Gary Locke had set in motion a series of unilateral actions including starting the call-up of the National Guard and authorizing the movement of Washington State Patrol units from around the state to Seattle. He arrived at the MACC at 2:50 p.m., about ten minutes ahead of the mayor. "Almost immediately upon arriving at the command center, there was no doubt in my mind that we needed to call up the National Guard," Locke said.

Upon Schell's arrival, officials from the SPD, Secret Service, FBI, State Patrol, Department of Justice, State Department, King County, the governor's office, and the White House moved into a back room and engaged in a heated discussion. While the argument continued, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno called the governor and insisted that the National Guard be called up.

After speaking with Reno, Locke met with the mayor. Schell then spoke with Assistant Police Chiefs Joiner and Pirak. "By that time, we had a chance to look at what was happening. The mayor immediately agreed and authorized [the emergency declaration]," said Joiner. "There was never any hesitation." The period between the mayor's arrival at the MACC and issuing the proclamation of civil emergency was less than half an hour. At 3:24 p.m., the mayor issued the emergency declaration.

What the declaration of civil emergency meant became a source of constant confusion during the period it was in effect. The mayor banned the possession of gas masks, but it continues to be unclear what law was violated by their possession. The "no protest" zone was open to some people and closed to others. Police took to enforcing an informal dress code, arresting people based on their appearance. In one case, an arrest was made for possession of an anti-WTO button. Conflicting statements were made by police officials about what was or was not allowed in the downtown area. Protesters had signs taken away from them in areas outside the "no protest" zone, but were not arrested. Others were arrested both inside and outside the zone. On Wednesday afternoon, the governor made a statement on television that order had been restored to downtown and invited people to come shopping, implying that the downtown was open and the curfew was lifted. Wednesday night, residents of Capitol Hill were arrested on their doorsteps when they asked police what was going on. The ACLU went to federal court and was turned down on the first of several legal challenges to the emergency ordinance.

Battle Resumes

By 3 p.m., the belated attempt by police to push the protesters away from the triangle of key intersections surrounding the Convention Center was in full motion. The Direct Action Network

police tactical team would break through the crowd and violently assault the Black Bloc."

This same source was very clear that the "Anarchists from Eugene" were only one faction among the Black Blocs: "While I know they were there, the black bloc had a few hundred people in it. I know there were people there from all over the country. The Eugene people have just been very open about violent demo tactics. The 60 Minutes episode really does disfavor to revolutionary anarchism, in that it portrays all anarchists through the eyes and mouths of the primitivists—who in my mind make up a small minority of anarchist activists. The primitivists put anti-technology and environmentalism at the forefront of their politics, and downplay, in my opinion, the real social and class struggle that has to take place."

Much has been made of the connection between the Black Bloc and Eugene, Oregon. Of the eleven people charged with felony crimes in connection with the protests, only one is from Eugene. Five are from Seattle, one from Olympia, Washington, one from Portland, Oregon, one from Maryland, and two places of residence are not reported. All of the five people charged with looting are from Seattle.

The vandalism and looting occurred in the area evacuated by police to create a buffer zone between the Direct Action Network protesters and the AFL-CIO parade. The center of the vandalized area coincides with the turning point of the parade, the corner of 5th and Pike. As the parade entered downtown, the protesters who left the march for the street protest were immediately confronted by the results of anarchist property destruction. This led some of the participants in the parade who joined the protests downtown to assume that the entire area looked like the three blocks in which the vandalism occurred.

Later, news reports echoed police claims that the tear gas and subsequent disorder followed, rather than preceded, the Black Bloc attack. The "Anarchists from Eugene" became a convenient, if totally misleading, media hook on which to hang the distinction between the "peaceful parade" and the "violent protests." In fact, the media's distinction between the two hinged entirely on whom the police attacked, not who attacked the police.

Declaration of Emergency

Before noon, security officials had been requesting the mayor issue a declaration of civil emergency. Seattle's civil emergency ordinance, officially titled Seattle Municipal Code 10.02, dates from 1973, when it was passed in response to Viet Nam war protests. After the Gulf War protests in 1992, some sections were revised. It is a sweepingly broad ordinance, which authorizes "extraordinary measures," including declaration of curfew, commandeering of property, closure of businesses, prohibition of alcoholic beverages, bans on the carrying or possession of firearms, and "any other measures" the mayor deems necessary. Under the ordinance, the mayor may issue orders "requesting federal and/or state assistance in combating such civil emergency" and "closing to the public any or all public places including streets, alleys, public ways, schools, parks, beaches, amusement areas, and public buildings."

The power of declaring a civil emergency rests entirely with the mayor. The City Council is directed to meet at the "earliest practicable time" for "ratification and confirmation, modification, or rejection." The council avoided

for international negotiations. In terms of the protests, the federal strategy and national prestige hinged simply on getting Clinton into the conference.

Next on the list of WTO allies is the City of Seattle and Mayor Paul Schell. The City of Seattle, as host of the conference and lead jurisdiction, was the center of responsibility for containing the demonstrations. Aside from this hospitality, Schell's political concerns were complex. First of all, the primary reason for Seattle hosting the WTO conference was to promote regional trade interests: principally timber and forest products, wheat, and a variety of high tech industries, of which Microsoft and Boeing were the best known examples. Secondly, Schell was a liberal Democrat and had strong ties to the Democratic Party and its main source of financial support, the AFL-CIO. Third and last, Schell was deeply beholden to the progressive Democrats and environmentalists who were a key political constituency in Seattle, though mostly excluded from the Democratic Party by the labor interests. Schell's attempts to satisfy all of these interests were so riddled with contradictions that he became unable to control events and was ultimately left to twist slowly in the wind, abandoned by nearly everyone.

The direct point of contact between the Direct Action Network and the WTO was the Seattle Police Department (SPD). Under the leadership of Chief Norm Stamper, the SPD had become a national laboratory for a progressive philosophy of law enforcement known as "community policing." Recently, the relations between the police and Mayor Schell's administration had not been good. One of the outcomes of Chief Stamper's community policing initiative had been the formation of a police accountability organization which reported separately to the Chief and the City Council through two separate boards. The road to community policing had been rough and rocky, particularly in light of the resistance from rank and file cops. These frictions heightened the tensions surrounding the contract negotiations between the City and the police union.

The total size of the Seattle Police Department was roughly 1,800 officers, of whom about 850 were available for street duty throughout the city. Of these, 400 were assigned to the WTO demonstrations. Seattle had about the same ratio of police to population as Chicago, but Seattle's smaller size limited in the number of officers it could field against the protesters—unless, of course, the SPD entered into some sort of joint WTO operation with other police agencies in the region. By Wednesday, the second day of the protests, more than 500 state and regional police, plus some 200 National Guard would be deployed.

The largest two outside police forces available to Seattle were the King County Sheriff's department and the Washington State Patrol. Sheriff Dave Reichert was a conservative Republican and political foe of Mayor Schell. This reflected the long-standing division between Seattle and the King County government. The suburban fringe surrounding Seattle was the traditional political battleground in which statewide elections were fought. The outlying areas went to the Republicans and the heavily urbanized areas went to the Democrats. The suburbs swung back and forth between the two. The State Patrol chief was responsible to Gov. Gary Locke, a nominal Democrat who rose to the governorship through the King County Council. The governor also controlled the

National Guard, although these forces couldn't be committed without the declaration of a state of emergency by the governor and the request of the mayor. Neither the King County police nor the State Patrol were supporters of community policing policies, which meant that outside assistance would entail Chief Stamper presiding over a joint command divided by fundamental policy differences.

Mayor Schell decided that he and Chief Stamper would deal with the demonstrations without the direct support of other law enforcement agencies. Most critics have claimed that this decision was the reason the protests succeeded. There are strong reasons to believe that this is not so. The Tuesday protests would have succeeded in attaining their goals (though in a less spectacular fashion) even if the police presence had included the outside agencies.

One of the considerations which weighed against the employment of outside police on Tuesday was the strong possibility that they would attack the union parade and city residents. The deployment of outside police reinforcements was delayed long enough to protect the union parade. But the police attacks on city residents occurred on Capitol Hill, on Tuesday and Wednesday night. This was an area in which Schell's political support was strongest and also where many of the protesters were staying while in Seattle.

Wild Cards

Two more players deserve examination, especially since one ended up dominating the national media coverage. Neither of these two groups was numerous nor strategically significant in terms of the overall outcome of the WTO protests. However, both ended up effectively in control of the informational conflict in which the media was both the battleground and the prize.

The first of these groups were the so-called "Anarchists from Eugene," more correctly known as the "Black Blocs." The total number of Black Bloc participants numbered between one and two hundred people. The appearance of Black Blocs at protests is a relatively recent phenomenon. The purpose of Black Blocs is to show a visible presence of the more radical anarchist factions. A Black Bloc consists of protesters who wear black, carry anarchist flags and banners, and take a more confrontational approach to protest.

In an interview in *Active Transformation*, an anarchist journal, one participant in the Seattle Black Blocs explained it this way: "…Anarchists were not isolated in the black bloc. There were anarchists involved in every possible way. There were anarchist labor activists, puppeteers, non-violent lockdown blockaders, marching musicians, medics, communication people, media people, whatever—as well as a group of about two hundred in black masks who had prepared, also in affinity groups, to do as much symbolic physical damage to multi-national capitalism as possible. I have seen black blocs used in protests in the U.S. a lot but never so successfully. It is important to note that the black bloc was not the result of some conspiracy. It too happened quite spontaneously, with people who came from all over the country—with similar desires."

The media's tag-line of "Anarchists from Eugene" was one of those lazy half-truths which sums up to a conscious lie. The half-truth was that people from Eugene participated in the Black Blocs. The other unreported half of the

of the Black Bloc only at the beginning and end. The majority of the vandalism occurred around 4th and Pike, a corner that the Black Bloc avoided while being videotaped by KIRO TV. It is possible that the TV news crews missed the early stages of the vandalism and erroneously reported the vandalism as beginning later than was actually the case. The discrepancy between reports is partly due to the chaos which gripped the downtown, but is also due to the fact that large numbers of teenagers who were not part of the Black Bloc took advantage of the situation and likewise engaged in vandalism.

It was this second group, estimated to number at least one hundred or more, who engaged in looting some of the broken store windows, as well as occupying the awning over the Nike store. In addition to the damage to commercial property, police cars and limousines were vandalized with spray paint and by having their tires slashed.

Jeff Boscole, an eyewitness who was on Sixth Avenue, described how the two groups could be distinguished by their dress and the different slogans which they spray-painted on buildings and windows. According to Boscole, the Black Bloc graffiti consisted of legible political slogans, while the "wilding teenagers" were "tagging" with illegible individualized symbols which were not slogans.

Three of the "wilding teenagers" are clearly shown in two photographs published in the December 1 *Seattle Times*. One picture shows a lone teenager, standing on a deserted sidewalk and reaching through a broken window. Under one arm, he is holding a skateboard. The windows and front of the store are defaced with graffiti, some of which are anarchist slogans and others, particularly the one center-left which dominates the picture, are "tagging" signatures, the incomprehensible glyphs common throughout urban areas. The other photo shows two teenagers and the right foot of a third, as one breaks off the "T" in the Nike Town sign. None of the teenagers are masked and all three wear light-colored clothing.

The Black Bloc engaged in property destruction numbered no more than thirty to forty people, all dressed similarly in black and hooded or masked to prevent their identification. They moved at a brisk pace, occasionally stopping in small groups to break windows or spray-paint anarchist and anti-corporate slogans. Early in the raid, they twice attacked KIRO TV news crews, spraying the camera lenses with paint to stop the crews from taking pictures. After these attacks, news crews withdrew half a block to avoid further attacks. The Black Bloc maintained cohesion and moved along their route in a determined manner, several times scuffling with the non-violent protesters from the Direct Action Network. A handful of plainclothes police and FBI shadowed the group, reporting their movements. Police made no effort to halt the vandalism, but in several instances Direct Action Network protesters stopped or interfered with members of the Black Bloc, while others chanted "no violence" to little avail.

One anarchist described the action in the following terms: "When the large-scale window breaking began it was quite awe-inspiring. All of a sudden people we were walking with pulled out all sorts of tools: nail pullers, hammers, crowbars. They then proceeded to very quickly knock windows out of every bank, upper class, or multi-national clothing store. I even saw a woman smashing an ATM machine with a sledge hammer. I was afraid at any moment a

THE BLACK BLOC : DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
BATTLE RESUMES : AFTER

The Black Bloc

While the police were regrouping and preparing to force the Direct Action Network protesters to join the AFL-CIO parade, several groups took advantage of the lull in the battle. They've all been lumped together into a nameless anarchist horde, but the fact remains there were two distinct groups acting out different agendas, not one "organized" anarchist conspiracy as the myth would have it.

At approximately 1 p.m., the police temporarily stopped trying to push corridors through the protest area. The "Black Bloc" anarchists had entered into an understanding with the Direct Action Network that they would refrain from vandalism at least as long as the protests remained peaceful. This is another way of saying that they were loosely following the lead of the DAN organizers. How loosely is shown by the fact the Black Bloc arrived downtown armed with hammers, crowbars, spray paint, M-80 firecrackers, and paint bombs. Their goal was a "propaganda of the deed" centering around vandalizing chosen stores—Nike, Starbucks, the Gap, Old Navy and others—which they saw as fitting targets.

The Black Bloc were simply biding their time and waiting for an opportunity to vandalize these stores and then get away. They had been closely monitored by the police and FBI since the preceding day. Early Tuesday morning, the FBI had briefed Seattle Police on the Black Bloc's whereabouts and activities. The close observation of the Black Bloc included undercover FBI agents dressed to blend in with the anarchists, right down to wearing masks to hide their faces. Also present in the streets were members of the Army's Delta Force, a paramilitary counter-terrorist group, also dressed to blend in with the protesters.

According to KIRO TV, The Black Bloc rampage started on 6th Avenue between Pine Street and Olive Way. Vandals smashed the windows of a Starbucks coffee shop in the middle of the block, then moved north towards Olive Way. Turning west on Olive Way, they attacked the SeaFirst bank, then turned south on 5th Avenue. Two or three stores along this block were vandalized. Emerging onto Pine Street, the Black Bloc turned again, moving west and attacking three or four more stores in the next two blocks. Reaching Third Avenue, the Black Bloc turned south and dispersed.

The *Seattle Times* reported that the vandalism centered mainly along Pike Street, between Third and Sixth Avenue. A map showing the location of vandalized and looted stores published in the *Times* overlaps the route

truth was that people from Seattle and the surrounding region committed much of the vandalism and nearly all of the looting. These people were not part of the Black Blocs, nor were their actions politically inspired. The lie was that the Black Bloc faction engaged in property destruction—which numbered perhaps 40 people at most—caused the police violence in the streets. The violence began hours before the window-breaking spree.

When literature captures a concise image which accurately portrays a larger whole, it is known as an archetype. When that process fails and the dominant image obscures the truth, it is stereotyping. In the middle of December, the *Seattle Weekly* and KPLU Radio sponsored a panel on media coverage of the WTO. The consensus emerged that both local and national media had succumbed to "lazy media shorthand" and failed to report the overall story in either a balanced or accurate way. The message which still hasn't penetrated the media is that the Black Blocs accomplished an international coup of "culture jamming" by selectively targeting a handful of retailers and banks for broken windows. In committing this vandalism, they conformed to pre-established media stereotypes of "violent anarchists" and effectively hijacked several weeks of coverage in a manner that served their propaganda goals admirably.

The primary target of the Black Blocs was neither the WTO nor the businesses whose windows were broken. The Black Blocs were in Seattle to radicalize the WTO opponents. And that is precisely what they did—with the significant assistance of the media and second wild card group.

The other wild card group was that segment of the Seattle Police Department which sought to disrupt the chain of command and force the initial confrontation with demonstrators into chaos. To put it bluntly, these officers comprised the faction within the police department that had been most threatened by Chief Stamper's reforms—the criminal element. "Organized crime is the continuation of business by criminal means," says Dr. Phil Williams, international expert on organized crime. And criminal business, just like legitimate business, requires the active support and participation of law enforcement.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Seattle went through a series of scandals involving organized crime and police corruption. The popular view of organized crime as an "underworld" operation, totally divorced from everyday business and politics was seriously challenged by the work of William J. Chamblis, a sociologist at the University of Washington. Chamblis' study of organized crime in Seattle, *On the Take: From Petty Crooks to Presidents*, showed that "crime is not a by-product of an otherwise effectively working political economy, it a main product of that economy. Crime is in fact a cornerstone on which the political and economic relations of societies are constructed." Rather than a "few bad apples," corruption is the normal state of affairs. Chamblis' work and other research shows that "organized crime really consists of a coalition of politicians, law-enforcement people, businessmen, union leaders and (in some ways least important of all) racketeers."

Seattle's police history has been as colorfully sordid as any other American city's. The criminal economy of drugs, prostitution, gambling, and the financial apparatus which such large-scale businesses require is no different in Seattle than elsewhere. From

Seattle's beginnings around the "Skid Road" at the Denny sawmill to the current flap over "police misconduct," police morale has been a reliable indicator of the level of corruption. Recently, morale had been low, which meant that the crooked cops were on the defensive. The focus of the criminal element's displeasure had been Chief Stamper and his Senior Leadership Team—or, as the department's rank and file pronounced it, the "sluts." The criminal element among the Seattle Police Department had only one goal: embarrass Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper.

The initial approach by the opponents of police accountability was the circulation of mutinous talk regarding the "softness" of the official strategy for dealing with the demonstrators. During an October crowd control training session, Assistant Chief Ed Joiner answered questions about protester violence by saying that there was nothing to worry about and the protests would be non-violent. SPD Officer Brett Smith and others claim the FBI and Secret Service had briefed King County Sheriff's officers to "fully anticipate that five to six officers would be lost during the protests, either seriously injured or killed," as Smith told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter Dan Raley. When Officer Smith and others spoke with their commander about the stories coming from the King County police, they were told not to spread rumors. It appears likely that statements predicting violent attacks were part of the Sheriff's training and it is certain that the predictions were hysterical and provocative.

The success in undermining Chief Stamper's command depended on the breakdown of law and order in the streets. Whose law and what order was the question. If the mayor and police chief could be maneuvered into declaring a civil emergency, then the regional, state and federal agencies would be able to enter the conflict and the hard-liners strategy would prevail for a while.

own hands" to obtain new supplies of gas and pepper spray. Later reports suggest that the new supplies were part of Joiner's "messy" post-parade attack plans.

Things quieted down while the police organized new supplies of gas and pepper spray. Officers sped to Auburn, Renton, and Tukwila police departments, as well as the King County Jail and Department of Corrections, emptying munitions stores and ferrying the supplies back to downtown. Other officers bought additional chemical agents from a local law enforcement supply business. Meanwhile, a police captain flew to Casper, Wyoming to pick up a large quantity of gas, "stinger shells," and other paraphernalia from Defense Technology Corp., a subsidiary of Armor Holdings. The locally-obtained gas and pepper spray were driven as close to the street action as possible. The munitions were transferred into gym bags and knapsacks which were then run through the streets by plainclothes detectives.

Other preparations did not go as well as the deliveries of tear gas and pepper spray. The declaration of civil emergency was delayed until 3:24 p.m., preventing police reinforcements from other law enforcement agencies and the National Guard from being legally deployed until long after the AFL-CIO march had withdrawn. Assistant Chief Ed Joiner's "messy" plan was also thwarted by the flat refusal of the Seattle Fire Department to turn fire hoses on demonstrators, a detail which was not reported in the press until long after the protests were over.

a perimeter connecting the hotels, the Convention Center and the Paramount Theatre were blocked all day by the size of the protest. The police command retained strategic cohesion, despite the discord at the top and the chaos in the streets. Tactical orders from the command continued to be executed by the officers in the front line—they charged when ordered and reformed after each charge. Much attention has been given to excessive violence by officers, including repeated attacks on reporters. These incidents were relatively commonplace, but did not involve loss of control by the upper command. Seattle political researcher Dan Junas cites the police ability to regulate the tempo of the street battles as strong evidence that the political leadership remained in control. "As the labor marchers approached, the police got off the gas," said Junas.

From about noon on, the Multi-Agency Command Center in the Public Safety Building began filling with top-ranking officials from government and law enforcement. Federal officials were speaking loudly about the consequences of not regaining control of the streets. State Patrol Chief Annette Sandberg described the federal officials as in a "kind of panicky mode."

The decision—never seriously questioned by those in charge—to guarantee the AFL-CIO parade took place had several requirements attached to it. First of all, the declaration of civil emergency was already in motion. There wasn't really a question of whether it was going to happen, but only if the crackdown would catch the AFL-CIO parade before it withdrew from downtown.

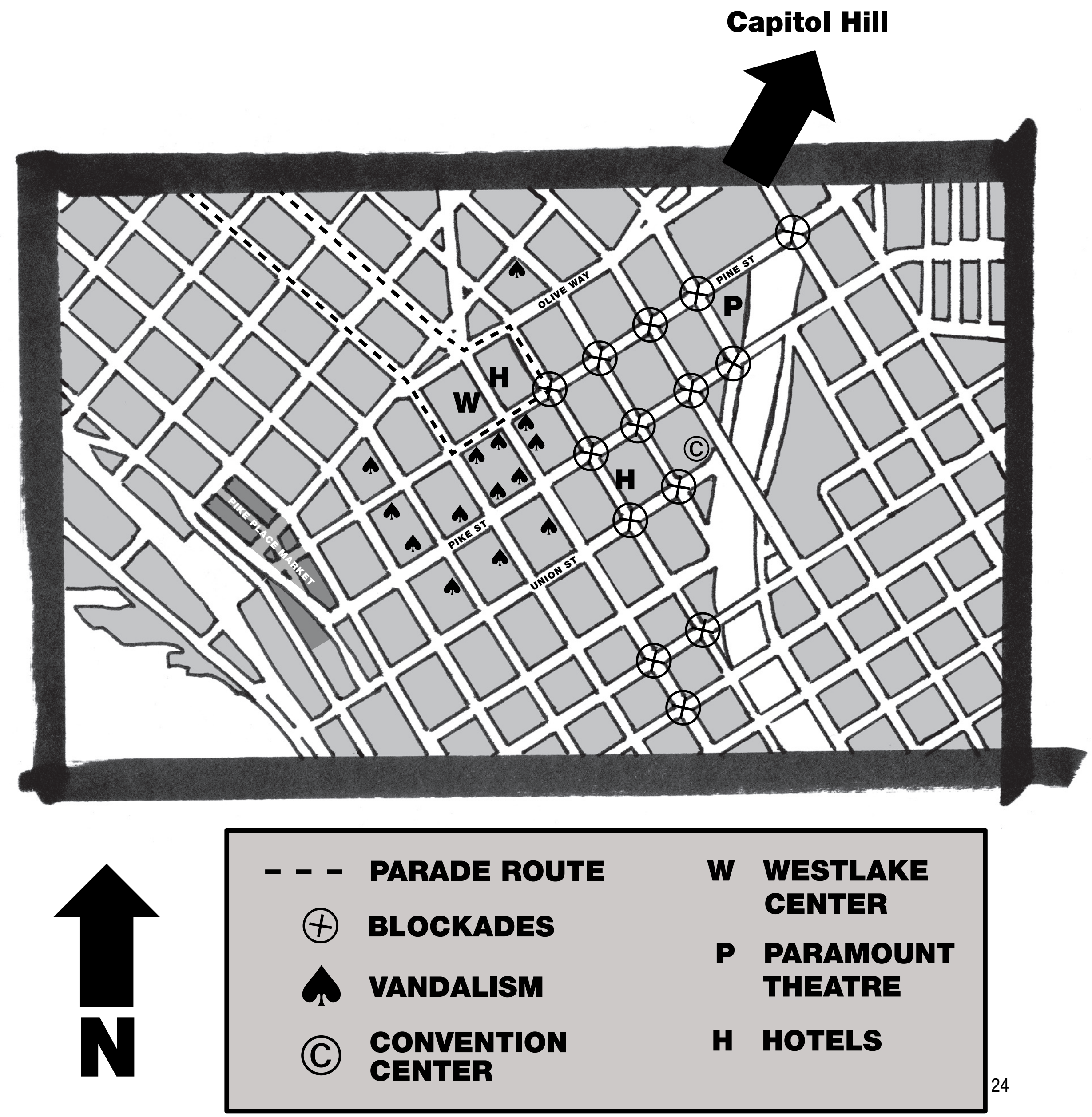
At 12:45 p.m., Governor Gary Locke authorized his chief of staff to begin preparing to up the National Guard. An hour earlier, State Patrol Chief Annette Sandberg had ordered State Patrol troopers in Eastern Washington on higher alert and dispatched a 22-member Civil Disturbance Team from Spokane to drive the 400 miles to Seattle. Traveling at top speed, they would not arrive before dark.

Shortly after Locke set the National Guard in motion, his office in Olympia received a telephone call from a furious Secretary of State Madeline Albright. Albright demanded the Governor immediately take action to release her from her hotel where she was trapped by the demonstrators. The Governor would later get strong pressure from Attorney General Janet Reno to crack down on the protests.

Governor Locke was able to claim that he was taking action—preparing to call up the National Guard, moving State Patrol troops over long distances, and pressuring Mayor Schell to declare a civil emergency—but all of these things would take time. What he did not do was accept full responsibility and declare a state of emergency. That was reserved for Mayor Schell. Locke's staff counsel, Everett Billingslea, began compiling a chronology of the Governor's actions for the now-inevitable inquest.

SPD Assistant Chief Joiner prepared more immediate action. The police attacks on the protesters reached a peak shortly before the parade departed from the Seattle Center. According to police sources, nearly all of the available tear gas was expended before the parade approached downtown. In the preparations for the protest, Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper had laid in stocks of about $20,000 worth of gas. This was one-fifth the amount recommended by federal officials. According to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, police officers "took matters into their

DOWNTOWN SEATTLE



TERRAIN OF THE BATTLEFIELD

The geography of the WTO conference site played a central role in determining the success of the protests. The accompanying illustrations show the field of battle and its significant features.

First and most importantly, the Washington Trade and Convention Center is located on the edge of downtown. It is built over the I-5 freeway and is accessible from only two sides. As a site for a blockade, it is perfect. The area is triangular, with the freeway side inaccessible. The Direct Action Network blockaded the area along the north and west streets. The blockade was several blocks deep and concentrated on a dozen intersections.

Secondly, the sites of two major skirmishes which dominated media attention, Capitol Hill and the Pike Place Market, had nothing to do with conducting the conference or moving delegates between the Convention Center, the Paramount Theatre or the downtown hotels. Likewise, the area in which the Black Bloc vandalism occurred is outside the blockade area and not part of the streets directly connecting the Convention Center with the Westin Hotel or the Paramount Theatre.

Capitol Hill and the Pike Place Market form two poles along the major axis of crowd mobility, the named streets which run northeast/southwest through the downtown. The Market is built on a steep bluff which formed Seattle's original shoreline. The bluff forms a geographic barrier which stops all movement towards the waterfront. Capitol Hill is a dense residential neighborhood—the densest in the city. Broadway, the main street which forms the backbone of the Capitol Hill commercial district, runs north/south along the crest. There is a steep change in elevation along Seattle's east-west axis running from the crest of Capital hill to the waterfront.

The area immediately to the north of the convention center is predominantly open parking lots and small buildings, compared to the more densely built-up downtown. To the west, the long blocks of the downtown avenues (7th, 6th, 5th, ending in 1st Ave) form a barrier which channels movement into a few streets (Pike, Pine, Union, and University). Blockades on these streets effectively shut off the area. The east and south sides of the Convention Center are cut off by the freeway.

To maintain effective control of the area, the police would have needed a perimeter roughly on the order of Thursday's "no protest zone." Given the decision to rely on the Seattle Police alone, this lengthy perimeter was impossible to control with 400 officers. The additional

Center—due to both political and logistical reasons. If the police tried and failed to prevent the march, things would clearly take a turn for the worse. Third, if the parade was canceled, the AFL-CIO would be denied any credit for the outcome of the protests. Finally, whoever was going to be gassed or pepper-sprayed in Seattle, it wasn't going to be the labor leaders.

Greta Gaard had ridden to the rally on a labor bus from Bellingham, one hundred miles to the north of Seattle. She reports in Bellingham's Every Other Weekly that the "rainbow flag" (non-union) participants at the rally decided around noon that they were going to leave the stadium and march downtown. The word of the street battles had reached the stadium only minutes after the first gas was released at 10 a.m.. It took an hour before the crowd was lined up in the streets, chanting "We want to march!" The walk towards downtown was oddly quiet. "There were no police, media, or crowd-watchers in sight," wrote Gaard. "Then the answer hit me: we weren't a threat."

A sheet-metal union member, Mike Ottoloino, got into a confrontation with the AFL-CIO marshals, saying, "This isn't a march, this is a parade!"

As the parade arrived at 5th Avenue and Pike Street, AFL-CIO marshals began blocking progress towards the convention center, saying "The route has been changed. Circle around here." Police were massing several blocks away, but were not visible to the people arriving from the Seattle Center. Gaard and several thousand others turned away from the march, just in time to run into the renewed police push to move people away from the convention center. The momentum of the thousands leaving the march and moving towards the Convention Center carried several blocks beyond the parade's pivot at 5th and Pike. Gaard and her friends found themselves at 6th and Pike, one of the most fiercely contested intersections of the battle, but temporarily an island of relative calm due to the absence of police. Behind them, the labor parade moved away from downtown and back towards the Seattle Center, unmolested by police.

Though Gaard didn't know it, the unsuccessful police push was timed to herd people into the parade. However, as had been the case all day, the size of the crowds blocked movement and the police ceased advancing when the now-expanded and enlarged crowd could not fall back any further. As shown by Gaard's relatively easy progress to within a block of the Convention Center, the reinforcements strengthened the moving blockade ringing the WTO conference.

The AFL-CIO parade delivered crucial reinforcements to the protesters instead of sweeping them out of downtown. As marchers left the parade, this completely crushed any police fantasies that the demonstrators would abandon the downtown and return control of the streets to the police.

Pause to Regroup

The police plan to reorganize for an attempt to force the Direct Action Network protesters out of the downtown area and into the AFL-CIO parade set in motion several different actions which had a dramatic effect on perceptions of the Battle in Seattle. In order to understand how these actions converged it is necessary to step back in time to around noon, when Assistant Chief Joiner was turning down requests to declare a civil emergency and cancel the AFL-CIO parade.

The repeated attempts by police to

able guess that much of the mayor and chief's time between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. was devoted to negotiations with the labor leaders.

The final decision was to allow the AFL-CIO parade from the Seattle Center to downtown. This sealed the fate of the street actions as a victory for the Direct Action Network. If the march had been canceled and the additional protesters had been prevented from joining in the chaos downtown, the city stood a better chance of restoring order. Instead, the strategy of using the AFL-CIO to contain and neutralize the Direct Action Network protests was drastically modified. The city's capitulation to the protests was underscored at 1 p.m. by the announcement from the WTO that it was canceling the opening ceremonies.

The decision by Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper to allow the march was so bizarre that it is worth quoting the December 16 story by Seattle Times reporters Mike Carter and David Postman:

About 11 a.m., SPD Assistant Chief Pirak—watching events unfold from the city's emergency operation center—called Joiner at the MACC [Multi-Agency Command Center] and "asked whether we wanted to ask the mayor if we wanted to declare a state of emergency," Joiner said.

Despite the fact "we were getting hit with much larger numbers of protesters than we had anticipated," Joiner refused.

Instead, he opted to let the AFL-CIO march proceed, a move that aimed as many as 20,000 more people toward downtown as skirmishes between police, demonstrators and anarchist vandals were escalating.

Joiner believed the march would actually work in favor of his stretched police lines. The strategy, he said, was for the peaceful march to sweep the other demonstrators into its ranks and deposit them several blocks away.

The march was supposed to wheel away from the Washington State Convention and Trade Center at Fourth Avenue and Pine Street [several blocks from the Convention Center] and turn north and west toward a "dispersal point" near Republican Avenue [back near the Memorial Stadium]. The police intended to move in behind the demonstrators and expand the perimeter around the hotels and convention center.

Instead, thousands of the demonstrators turned into town and chaos ensued.

"I still believe we could have controlled what we were dealing with at that time had the march turned," Joiner said. "It was not going to be clean. It would have been messy. But I think we would have been able to open a corridor to get delegates in and out."

In other words, the Direct Action Network protesters were expected to abandon the streets and leave downtown when they saw their reinforcements arrive. Assistant Chief Joiner's explanation is simply not credible, as the WTO ceremonies had been canceled before the parade began. Whatever the level of chaos and unreality at the command center, it is unlikely that anyone thought a column of twenty thousand people would march downtown and then "sweep the other demonstrators into its ranks."

Several factors affected the decision to allow the AFL-CIO parade to proceed. First of all, the police were running short of tear gas and needed time to obtain new supplies and deliver them downtown. Second, they were not prepared to arrest marchers at the Seattle

resources of county, state, and federal forces would have been hard pressed to maintain such a perimeter in the face of the approximately 40,000 protesters, demonstrators, and parade participants present on Tuesday. On Wednesday, these additional police forces were available and the number of protesters was approximately halved. Even with this sizable shift in the numbers on opposing sides, the police were unable to control downtown effectively.

Amidst all the criticism—mostly coming from law enforcement agencies which failed even more disastrously than the Seattle Police Department in maintaining order—about the police's "lack of preparedness" for the demonstrations, the larger perimeter, increased security troops, and suspension of civil liberties which accompanied the mayor's declaration of civil emergency failed miserably in the face of much smaller numbers of protesters on Wednesday.

The geography of Seattle's downtown favors protesters. In the last decade, two major civil disturbances—accompanying first the Gulf War protests and the "Rodney King" riots—followed much the same path over the same streets, as did the numerous protests during the Vietnam War. Given sufficient numbers and even the most hare-brained strategy, protesters have the ability to dominate the streets of Seattle.

STRATEGIES

None of the strategies employed by the three major players in Tuesday's conflict was particularly hare-brained, but the most unrealistic belonged to the AFL-CIO, at least in the sense of the battle for control of the streets. The AFL-CIO strategy was to hold a rally at the Seattle Center and then march downtown—but not too far. Central to the AFL-CIO strategy was the notion that if they could contain the majority of the demonstrators and keep them out of the downtown area, when Clinton announced his pro-labor and protectionist policies, the AFL-CIO would be able to claim credit. All the AFL-CIO had to do was prevent any effective protests by groups not under their control and allow the media to spin the tale of how labor caused a "sudden change" in national policy. The AFL-CIO proved to be unequal to the task of rounding up all the protesters and keeping them muzzled.

The Direct Action Network planned more effectively, and in the end more realistically, with a "People's Convergence" consisting of three waves of blockaders enclosing the WTO conference site. The first wave consisted of "affinity groups" who had opted for non-violent civil disobedience and arrest. Their job was to penetrate the area close to the conference site, seize the dozen strategic intersections which controlled movement in the protest target, and hang on until reinforcements arrived. The second wave comprised protesters who had opted for non-violent demonstration and not being arrested. Their task was to protect the first wave from police violence and plug up the streets by sheer numbers and passive resistance. The third wave was a march by the People's Assembly, composed mostly of environmental and human rights groups who elected to participated in the street protests instead of the labor parade. This group entered downtown from the south at about 1 p.m. and marched to the Paramount Theatre inside the protest zone. The first and second waves were loosely organized into a dozen simultaneously converging affinity groups, swarming the protest target from all directions. Each affinity group blockaded a specific intersection. The blockade would be maintained as long as possible until police had arrested sufficient demonstrators to regain control of the streets.

The Direct Action Network's strategy is a classic example of "netwar" conflict. Netwar is a concept introduced in the early 1990s by two researchers at the RAND corporation, a government-funded think tank which began under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force. In a now-seminal paper titled "Cyberwar is Coming!", RAND

Society's WTO action coordinator, his organization and other protest groups that formed the Direct Action Network used the Nextel system to create a cellular grid over the city. They broke into talk groups of eight people each. One of the eight overlapped with another talk group, helping to quickly communicate through the ranks.

In addition to the organizers' all-points network, protest communications were leavened with individual protesters using cell phones, direct transmissions from roving independent media feeding directly onto the internet, personal computers with wireless modems broadcasting live video, and a variety of other networked communications. Floating above the tear gas was a pulsing infosphere of enormous bandwidth, reaching around the planet via the internet.

Labor's U-turn

By 11 a.m., the rally at Memorial Stadium had been under way for an hour. Roughly 20,000 people half-filled the stadium. The union numbers were swelled by the anti-WTO organizations that had accepted the labor invitation to protest the WTO. These groups were a mixture of environmental, social justice, and human rights groups. Over the next two hours, the joint planning by the labor leaders and police to break the DAN blockade would irretrievably split the brief alliance between labor and the progressive left.

The disorder spreading through the streets downtown was instantly communicated to the crowd at the rally through cell phones, radios, and the rest of the infosphere. Behind the scenes, furious activity was taking place to prevent the parade from being canceled by city authorities. Meanwhile, back at the police command center, Assistant Chief Ed Joiner was turning down demands from his field commanders to declare a state of civil emergency which would cancel the parade.

Joiner said he overruled a recommendation by Assistant Chief John Pirak to declare a state of emergency Tuesday about 11 a.m. The veto, Joiner said, was made in consideration of plans for the AFL-CIO march towards downtown. "I felt declaring a state of emergency at that time, before the march ever got under way, was going to send a very strong public message that we already had major difficulties as a city," Joiner said.

Joiner's statement underscores the widespread fantasy on the part of city officials that the uproar which followed the 10 a.m. deployment of tear gas was somehow a secret which they could keep. This air of unreality was demonstrated by Seattle's KOMO TV, which tried to implement a censorship policy by not covering the news as it unfolded in the streets. KOMO has received richly deserved ridicule for their censorship of "illegal demonstrations," but the attitude was not theirs alone. Anyone with an internet connection could plug into live video and audio feeds from the street battles from the alternative media. The commercial media struggled to keep up, but was continuously hampered by their inability to understand what was going on. Editorial attempts to reframe the protests as illegitimate and marginal confused the issue further.

The whereabouts and activities of Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper during this period remain somewhat mysterious. Given the intense concern centering on the AFL-CIO parade on the part of law enforcement officials, it is a reason

confrontational are equally untrue. The more aggressive demonstrators had moved towards the police positions and videotapes clearly show that there was no buffer space between the opposing sides in many areas. One segment aired on KIRO TV shows members of the Black Bloc confronting police and being extremely provocative, but not attacking anyone or committing vandalism. The police view of the crowd was framed by these more aggressive demonstrators, while the vast majority of the crowd was unable to see the police and was in a giddy, triumphant mood.

After the first canisters were fired, the use of tear gas and pepper spray spread rapidly throughout the protest area.

With the release of the gas, mood in the streets rapidly changed. The police were successful in advancing against the crowd. There were no instances where police charges were repulsed, or where the crowds counter-attacked and cut off police. One major effort to re-open the street connecting the Paramount Theatre to the hotels moved the crowds back until running out of steam. In short, the police tactics were of limited success and ineffective.

The net effect of the use of gas and the police charges was to cause the crowds to surge from one point to another without allowing police to gain control of the streets. In the midst of the melee, the "lock-down" affinity groups remained in place, blocking intersections and anchoring the protest to the area around the convention center. Police gassed and pepper-sprayed the immobile groups, but could not arrest them and remove them from the area due to the continued blockade. These tactics were both ineffective in getting the blockaders to move and successful in infuriating the crowds who saw their main mission as the protection of these groups. The crowds were now frightened and angry, but determined to maintain control of the streets.

The overall strategic situation remained unchanged, despite the tactical chaos. The protesters numbers were sufficient to keep the blockade intact, though it was now a blockade of continuous movement. The police remained isolated inside the protest area without an open avenue to the outside through which arrestees could be removed. Both sides remained under the overall command of their respective strategies, regardless of the excitement. The area involved in the disorder—as it clearly was after an hour of tear gas and chaos—spread down Pike and Pine Streets. The protests remained centered on the Convention Center. Although the crowds expanded into the surrounding blocks under the police attacks, they kept surging back to protect the "lock-down" affinity groups holding the key intersections.

The cohesion of the Direct Action Network was partly due to their improvised communications network assembled out of cell phones, radios, police scanners, and portable computers. Protesters in the street with wireless Palm Pilots were able to link into continuously updated web pages giving reports from the streets. Police scanners monitored transmissions and provided some warning of changing police tactics. Cell phones were widely used.

Kelly Quirke, Executive Director of the Rainforest Action Network, reports that early Tuesday, "the authorities had successfully squashed DAN's communications system." The solution to the infrastructure attack was quickly resolved by purchasing new Nextel cell phones. According to Han Shan, the Ruckus

analysts David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla proposed a new framework for viewing conflict in the information age. The essence of netwar is the emerging forms of conflict in which one or more of the major participants consist of networks, rather than institutions. The central feature of informational conflicts is the struggle for understanding and knowledge, as opposed to more traditional conflicts which focus on controlling territories or resources.

Netwar is inherently less violent than other forms of conflict, particularly when it involves non-governmental organizations dedicated to human rights and peace causes. One of the first full-blown manifestations of netwar was the Zapatista conflict in Chiapas. The networked intervention of international groups placed very real limits on the use of violence by the Mexican government in suppressing the insurrection.

In the case of the Direct Action Network, the central prize consisted of the understanding that the WTO multi-lateral trade agreements are intensely corrosive to democracy, at least that form of democracy which entails a knowledgeable public participating in policy formation in meaningful ways.

Netwars are fought by networks; collections of groups and organizations guided by non-hierarchical command structures which communicate through "all-points" communications channels of considerable bandwidth and complexity. The DAN communications channels blanketed the Seattle area and had global reach via the internet. Institutions, such as corporate media, police and the AFL-CIO, tend to depend on narrow communications channels which are highly centralized and hierarchical.

Networks operate by "swarming" their opponents like bees or white blood like organisms than machines. They approach stealthily and from many directions in offense. In defense, they can react like anti-bodies moving towards points of attack. Netwar's line between offense and defense can be blurred, leaving opponents unclear about what is occurring and how to respond. Throughout the protests, the Direct Action Network were able to offensively swarm their opponents repeatedly, as shown by the seizure of key intersections on Tuesday and the easy penetration of the "no-protest" zone on Wednesday. The anti-body defense was shown when crowds moved towards police attacks or mass arrests. The swarming action was also apparent when numerous groups within the AFL-CIO rally and parade successfully resisted efforts by the union leadership to keep them from supporting the DAN blockade of the WTO convention site.

The network form of organization is particularly robust and resilient in the face of adversity. The decentralized command and control structure allows rapid shifts of strategic targeting. It is highly resistant to "decapitation" (attacks which target leadership) and the disruption of communication channels. All three of these features were present during the WTO protests. The diffuse communications network allowed protesters to continuously adapt to changing conditions. The consultative form of decision-making enhanced the ability to coordinate large-scale actions. The police attempts to arrest "ringleaders" on Wednesday were fruitless, since leadership was widely shared throughout the network of protest groups. The communications network was continuously being expanded and modified. On Tuesday, police cut off many of the Direct Action Network communications channels, but in a few hours a

new and larger network based on cell phones was functioning.

The competing strategies of the Direct Action Network and the AFL-CIO put the police in the classically disastrous position of dividing their forces and inviting defeat in detail. The AFL-CIO rally and parade was planned in conjunction with the police. Although it would not require much more in the way of security than any other parade, it still demanded adequate coverage at the rally and along the parade route. The security requirements at the WTO conference site were subject to considerably more uncertainty. The DAN organizers had participated in lengthy negotiations with the police and had made their blockade strategy known, at least in general outline. DAN had repeatedly and publicly stated that their goal was to "shut down the WTO." Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper were faced with the difficult decision of allocating forces against two different opponents using markedly different strategies.

The ultimate police decision was to rely on a "tripwire" outer perimeter which would trigger the arrests at the Convention Center, backed up with an inner perimeter to prevent the Direct Action Network protesters from entering the WTO conference. Working with the labor leaders, the police would use the AFL-CIO rally as a means of containing the crowds and keeping the majority of them away from the Convention Center. Much has been made of the decision to rely on a close perimeter defense of the Convention Center, but a larger perimeter and more police would have simply moved the line of battle and dispersed the police, as occurred on Wednesday.

The real question facing the police was whether they would be confronting a protest or a parade. The police put their money on the parade and lost. The labor parade as the dominant factor of the protests was the least likely of all outcomes, but the only one which the police had a chance of controlling.

The current theory of controlling protests usually revolves around the willingness of protesters to be steered into some venue in which the protest can be neutralized, marginalized, and trivialized. When this agreement doesn't exist, the older police strategy is to treat a protest as a riot—gas, baton charges, assault, and occasionally arrests. On Tuesday, the first strategy failed and on Wednesday the second strategy failed.

and visiting government officials, discovered that the streets between the Convention Center, the adjacent hotels and the Paramount Theater—a distance of up to five blocks along some routes—were closed by protesters. "It hadn't taken long for things not to be working very well." said Ronald Legan, the special agent in charge of the Seattle office of the Secret Service.

Though the police didn't realize it, the Direct Action Network plan had achieved its goal. They had blockaded the streets and shut down the WTO. According to the agreed-upon script, the police would now arrest the protesters. Unfortunately, the protesters had been so successful at blockading the area around the convention center that police couldn't move. It makes no sense to arrest someone if you can't remove them from the area. The next phase of the protest plan was to hang on to the streets as long as possible. Since the police remained stationary for the most part, other than slowly moving single vehicles through the crowds, there was little for the protesters to do but enjoy themselves with chants, singing, and drumming. The overall mood was festive rather than hostile. The protesters had won, though it was too early for anyone to know that for sure. Until several hours after dark, the Direct Action Network would control all movement in the triangle of streets under blockade.

Strategic surprise doesn't occur in the field so much as in the mind of the opponent. The longer it's delayed, the more complete its effects. In the case of Mayor Schell, the surprise and disbelief would dominate his actions until late afternoon. By 9:30 a.m., the police command post was being inundated by reports from the streets that control of the situation—meaning the ability to move police and delegates through the streets—had been lost.

The divisions between the rival commanders began to widen as the morning wore on. "This was not an integrated command structure," King County Sheriff Dave Reichert said. "While everybody was at the table, it was made clear that the rest of us were relegated to supporting roles. Seattle was running the show."

Police Go on the Offensive

Shortly after 10 a.m., the Seattle Police Department got their show on the road. The Seattle Police began using tear gas to clear the streets.

It's still not clear if the order was issued by Assistant Chief Ed Joiner—Chief Stamper had delegated control of the WTO operation to him and did not arrive at the commanders' meeting until late that afternoon—or if was a spontaneous decision made by officers in the street. The use of gas may have been an effort to open a pathway into the protest area from outside, as the gas was fired at on Sixth Avenue, between University and Union Streets. This is the extreme southern end of the triangular area blockaded by the Direct Action Network. The *Seattle Times* said "police used gas to disperse demonstrators massing." Police officials later explained that the gas was an attempt to expand and re-connect their now isolated perimeters inside the crowds. None of these explanations makes much sense.

The events surrounding the decision to use gas continue to be cloaked in confusion and controversy. Later claims that the police resorted to gas in response to widespread violent attacks and vandalism are now known to be absolutely untrue. The counter-claims that police were un-

Seizing the Emerald City

At 5 a.m. Tuesday morning, Washington State Patrol Chief Annette Sandberg had coffee at the Starbucks near the Convention Center. Nobody would be having coffee there that evening, as it would be smashed and looted. Sandberg saw demonstrators moving into strategic positions before any police had arrived. The converging columns of the Direct Action Network began to shut down Seattle.

The first Direct Action Network "arrest" affinity groups moved in on the strategic intersections in the vicinity of the Convention Center. Afterwards, these protesters said that they were surprised by the absence of any police presence on the streets. In many locations, the "arrest" groups arrived earlier than the "non-arrest" groups which were supposed to protect them from removal by the police. The news photographs of these initial "lock-down" groups have a surrealistic air to them. In the empty streets after dawn, groups of protesters lock themselves together with bicycle locks or tubes covering their linked arms to prevent police from removing them individually.

King County Sheriff Dave Reichert says he got a telephone call at 8 a.m. from a county detective. "He said, 'Sheriff, we're trapped... We have no backup,'" Reichert claimed. "I had officers barricaded in the hotel with a mob literally pounding on the glass, and there was nobody to help them. Nobody." Reichert wasn't on the scene, but already he was seeing "mobs." KIRO-7 television crews were at the same location and show lines of grinning demonstrators holding hands and blocking the street—no "mob literally pounding on the glass."

By 8 a.m., most of the key intersections had been seized by the protesters, now reinforced their second wave. Meanwhile, at the Memorial Stadium at the Seattle Center, the gates were opening for the AFL-CIO rally scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Chartered busses from around the region have been on the road for some time, carrying a mixture of union members and protesters to Seattle. The AFL-CIO had done a mass mailing throughout Washington State, sending tasteful green postcards to non-union supporters of a variety of liberal and progressive organizations. "Join the March of the Century," the cards read. The AFL-CIO strategy of parading without protesting dovetailed neatly with the city plans for a minuscule protest and a media-genic parade.

As the number of protesters increased, the 400 police remained in their lines around the Convention Center or at their positions at the Memorial Stadium. The slow infiltration of demonstrators made it difficult for the police to gauge the intentions of the crowd. Though the police didn't realize it, the Direct Action Network had already swarmed them and now shifting to a defensive strategy of holding on to the streets that they now controlled. The flimsy rope and netting barriers, the "tripwire" at the Paramount Theatre, went down as protesters walked towards the line of city busses next to the theater. The busses were a second line of defense, separating the police from the crowd.

Protesters Own the Streets

By 9:10 a.m., "crowd-control efforts were encountering difficulty," according to Washington State Patrol Chief Sandberg. She placed troopers throughout Western Washington on alert. The day was barely started and the police plan was already beginning to break down. The Secret Service, responsible for the security of federal

INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

Underlying the failure of the police strategy for controlling the demonstrations was a fundamental failure of intelligence. The picture which law enforcement built of the developing protests was a catastrophe of wishful thinking, breathing their own exhaust, and the most classic of all blunders—mistaking tactics for strategy. The Seattle police and all of the responsible federal law enforcement agencies had the information necessary to appraise the situation. What was lacking was a comprehensive understanding of the strategy of the protests. Without that, all of the pieces of the intelligence puzzle were not going to fit into an accurate assessment and strategic plan.

The wishful thinking centered on the alliance between the police and the AFL-CIO. The plan for the labor parade to engulf the protests and steer them into a marginal venue was never a real possibility. The Direct Action Network and their allies had no intention of turning the protest organizing over to the unions. On Sunday, November 28, Teamsters president Hoffa was trumpeting Pat Buchanan as "the only presidential candidate who understands the trade issue." This was hardly the sort of analysis which would convince progressive activists to submit to the unions' nationalist and protectionist agenda. The Left has had decades of experience being sold down the river by organized labor and has learned that lesson well. If there was going to be an alliance between protesters and paraders, it was going to be on the protesters' terms or not at all. The city officials chose to believe the labor assurances of controlling the protesters. This led the police to drastically underestimate the number of protesters, who were at least as numerous as the paraders. Neither the police nor the unions foresaw the Direct Action Network being able to mount a successful protest. Once that assumption became the basis for planning, any evidence to the contrary was disregarded or misinterpreted.

The intelligence picture was further confused by the claims of federal law enforcement officials that the protests would be violent. The publicly released text of one FBI forecast was replete with hysterical predictions: "...elements within the protest community are planning to disrupt the conference... environmental or animal rights extremists or anarchist-induced violence... computer-based attacks on WTO-related web sites, as well as key corporate and financial sites... Corporate sponsors... may be subject to surveillance efforts from these groups... to identify the residences of key employees of sponsoring corporations...

These employees should remain alert for individuals who may be targeting them in furtherance of anti-WTO activities… Recipients should remain sensitive to threats made by anti-WTO groups."

Buried within this froth was, "The FBI assesses the potential threat of violence, to include criminal acts of civil disturbance, as low to medium for the Seattle area during the time frame of the WTO Meeting." Asked by reporters what "low to medium" meant, FBI spokesman Ray Lauer refused to answer, citing the "law-enforcement sensitive" nature of the report and the "controversy concerning planning over WTO." An anonymous law enforcement source cited by the *Seattle Times* stated that "low to medium" covered anything from simple civil disobedience to an Oklahoma City-style terrorist bombing.

Nowhere in the FBI "Terrorist Threat Advisory" was the slightest inkling of what was going to be happening in the streets beyond the fact that the conference was going to be "disrupted." The Direct Action Network and AFL-CIO plans had been trumpeted loudly, widely, and in considerable detail in the press by the organizers, summing up to non-violent civil disobedience shutting down the conference and an ineffectual parade designed to keep protesters away from the Convention Center. The city officials at the top elected to pick and choose among information to support their plans. The front-line officers did the same, if with opposite results. The rumors within the police department (fantasy or otherwise) about federal expectations of dead and wounded police added to the unreality.

Netwar conflicts are struggles for understanding and information. The FBI fantasies of violent terrorists directing the protests blinded and disabled the police. The more inaccurate the assessment of opposing forces, the greater the advantage to the side which possesses "topview"—comprehensive and realistic understanding.

CORELLATION OF FORCES
SEIZING THE CITY : PROTESTERS OWN THE STREETS
POLICE GO ON THE OFFENSIVE : LABOR'S U-TURN : PAUSE TO REGROUP

Correlation of forces

By Monday evening, November 30, the forces had aligned themselves. The Direct Action Network planned to shut down the WTO conference by swarming the streets. The AFL-CIO planned to hold a rally and parade in an effort to influence national trade policy—and the upcoming presidential elections. Police Chief Norm Stamper had decided the protests could be peacefully controlled by his own forces without outside assistance, knowing that the price of assistance could be the peace. The mayor had decided to let the AFL-CIO control his actions on Tuesday, hoping against all evidence that the unions would swallow and control the protesters. The Seattle Police Department was tasked with preventing the protests while allowing the labor parade. The outside law enforcement agencies were champing at the bit to enter into the fray, but as long as the SPD maintained order, they had to sit on the sidelines. The FBI and Secret Service cried doom and gloom—while signing off on Mayor Schell and Chief Stamper's plan. The Black Blocs were milling around the edges, fondling their crowbars and dreaming of chaos. What would happen next was anybody's guess, but the best guessers would win and the others would lose.

It's a hackneyed truism that no plan of battle survives contact with the opposition. This is exactly what happened on the morning of November 30, 1999 in Seattle.

The Direct Action Network protesters expected to show up, cross the "tripwires" of the flimsy police barriers and be arrested, probably with a light seasoning of pepper spray. The police on the streets expected to disperse the protesters before noon and maybe have a little tussle doing it. In the meantime, they were going to maintain discipline, show restraint, and "not be the spark." The mayor and the chief of police expected a paltry handful of demonstrators to show up downtown and get arrested in a mutual display of civility. The AFL-CIO expected to dominate the media coverage with a colorful parade from the Seattle Center towards—but not too close to—downtown. The Black Bloc expected to do a little graffiti and smash some carefully selected windows just as soon as the police got too preoccupied with the demonstrators. The FBI, if their "Terrorist Threat Advisory" can be believed, were preparing to counter a terrorist onslaught in cyberspace while combating terrorist home invasions or kidnappings. Actually, some of the FBI were dressing up in black protester disguises, complete with masks, and getting ready to join in the street party with the Black Bloc as close observers.